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Issue #264 — Volume 23 Number 3 — Saturday, March 4, 2023

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See page 28**

Local Events

Readers should assume that event information published in this issue is subject to change and information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization's website.

See pages 28-31 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- **St. Peter Church Lenten Fish Frys** - benefits local charities. every **Fri.** in March, 5-7 pm
- **NEPCO meeting**, Sat., **Mar. 11**, 10 am-12 pm, Fire department merger and emergency planning.
- **Meet and Greet with Monument Mayor Mitch LaKind**, Sat., **Mar. 11**, 10 am-12 pm.
- **Help Benet Hill nuns "Stuff the Truck" with food**, Sun., **Mar. 12**.
- **Palmer Lake Historical Society**, Thu., **Mar. 16**, meeting, 7 pm *KKK in Denver in the 1920s*.
- **Pikes Peak Brewing Co. St. Patrick's Weekend**, Fri.-Sat., **Mar. 17-18**. See ad on page 2.
- **Kiwanis/D38 talent show**, Sun., **Mar. 19**, 2 p.m
- **WMMI STEaM Camp**, Mon.-Fri., **Mar. 27-31**, 9 am - 3 pm, grades 3-5. See ad on page 8.
- **Our Community News mailing day**, Thu., **Mar. 30**, approx. 9 am-2 pm. Information on page 28.

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Circulation

Print Run: 22,900
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Stacks: 678

Celebrating Marie West's 100th



Above: Longtime Monument resident Marie West celebrated her 100th birthday on Feb.18 with a party at Trinity Lutheran Church, where she's known as Grandma because of all the kids she's taken care of. About 300 friends and relatives attended the party including her three daughters, all eight of her grandchildren and four of her 14 great-grandchildren. Her two great-great grandchildren were unable to attend. West told *Our Community News* she's "flabbergasted" that she's now a centenarian. Her advice to those who want to reach that age? "Just keep busy." Since retiring and moving to Monument in 1991, she kept busy by helping with home daycare until she was 95. Though not a smoker, West admits to enjoying the occasional margarita. She grew up on a farm in Iowa, and after high school she worked at a munitions factory. When she was old enough to enlist, she joined the WAVES branch of the Navy where she was part of the blimp ground crew handling ropes during takeoffs and landings. Among her jobs after the war was working with the first computers, including UNIVAC. *Photos by Michael Weinfeld.*

Monument Town Council, Feb. 6 and 21

Beacon Lite business withdraws annexation request after concerns from new board

By Chris Jeub

Monument Town Council business in February included filling its last council seats and gifting the town staff with additional paid vacation. Resolutions and ordinances surrounding the development of property on Beacon Lite Road were voted upon, reconsidered, and ultimately tabled to alleviate concerns expressed by new councilmembers and neighbors over traffic, safety, and tree removal. The month ended

with one of the applicants withdrawing its application, but another very similar application was granted. The council also discussed a controversial bill making its way through the Colorado State Legislature and convened to executive sessions to discuss how to legally proceed with the Dec. 28 investigation report. Refer to the February (www.ocn.me/v23n2.htm#mtc) and January (www.ocn.me/v23n1.htm#mbot) issues of *OCN* for back-

ground information on the investigation.

New board members

Seven seats exist in the Town Council, two of which are the mayor and mayor pro tem. Mitch LaKind, formerly a councilmember, was elected mayor in November and newly elected Steve King was appointed mayor pro tem. Of the remaining five seats, Jim Romanello continues to serve out his term and Kenneth

MONUMENT (Cont. on 2)

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, Feb. 21

Board president resigns; budget and draft calendar discussed

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education accepted the resignation of board President Chris Taylor and discussed the process for seeking and appointing a replacement at its Feb. 21 meeting. There also was

a detailed discussion of the current state of the district budget, plans for the 2023-24 school year, and potential changes in the school calendar. Declaration of vacancy on the board The board passed a resolution accepting the resignation of Taylor of

D38 District 1 effective Feb 21.

Following state statute, the board must select and appoint a replacement within 60 days of the vacancy. Superintendent KC Somers said the 60 days would be up on

D38 (Cont. on 7)

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MONUMENT (Cont. from 1)

Kimple and Sana Abbott were elected in November. Two seats were left vacant from LaKind's previous seat and the resignation of Redmond Ramos in December.



The Town Council interviewed five applicants for the two positions. Referencing the independent investigation of town management over the Home Rule Charter, Mayor LaKind asked the same question of all five candidates, "Do you believe the Home Rule Charter violates any

part of the U.S. Constitution?" All candidates answered "no."

Other councilmembers asked questions on how they would handle situations that would come up to the board. Tom Penewell expressed concern with recent yelling and shouting at town meetings but admitted surprise at how little there was this night. Jason Gross expressed the need to get zoning and water right. Roman Peek expressed the desire to keep a small town feel in Monument. Marco Fiorito, who ran for this seat and lost in the November election, and Laura Kronick referenced their previous work with the town.

At the end of the Feb. 6 meeting, Fiorito and Kronick received the most votes from the councilmembers and were appointed to the two positions on the board. They were sworn in on Feb. 21. All seven councilmember positions are now complete:

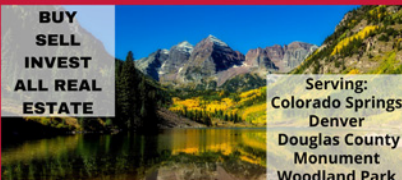
- Mitch LaKind, mayor (elected 2022, serving Term 1)
- Jim Romanello, councilmember (elected 2020, serving Term 1)
- Steve King, mayor Pro Tem (elected 2022, serving Term 1)
- Sana Abbott, councilmember (elected 2022, serving Term 1)



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- Kenneth Kimple, councilmember (elected 2022, serving until next regular election)
- Marco J. Fiorito, councilmember (appointed 2023, serving until next regular election)
- Laura Kronick, councilmember (appointed 2023, serving until next regular election)

Vacation gift for staff
In January, LaKind offered to gift town staff with two weeks' paid vacation as amends for "low morale" during December's independent investigation. Town Manager Mike

Foreman brought several suggestions of how to implement this gift while explaining several of the problems associated with it. Questions of administration, fairness, equitability, and whether productivity would remain high were discussed. Public safety for granting free vacation to

water and police departments was also a concern.
A total of four options were offered with the strongest recommendation being accepted by the council: Close town hall intermittently (10 separate eight-hour days) and provide Water and Police Department employees with 80 hours of



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administrative leave with required depletion by the end of the year.

Beacon Lite LLC

On Feb. 6, two resolutions and two ordinances involving the annexation and zoning of Beacon Lite LLC, a commercial property currently part

of El Paso County, were opposed by two of the five councilmembers before swaying a third, leaving interim town attorney Robert Cole to encourage the council to reconsider and table the resolutions until the next meeting. Town Planner Shawn Snow presented details of the annexation explaining unanimous support by the Planning Commission and recommended approval by the town staff. Even so, King and Kimple voted against the zoning of the property to Light Industrial (LI), and though Abbott voted for the resolu-

tion, she voted against the ordinance.

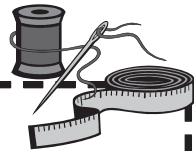
The vote followed public comments expressing concern primarily over the condition of Beacon Lite Road, which is maintained by El Paso County. A petition signed by 188 neighbors asked the council to consider the overall impact of all the developments along the road, not just one. Citizen Mike Kopycinski, speaking on behalf of the petitioners, expressed that they would also like to see right-turn lanes, sidewalks, the preservation of trees, proper setbacks, minimal heights, and minimal water usage for any new applicant on Beacon Lite Road.

John Clark, the applicant, seemed to agree with these concerns, asking the council to "put pressure" on the county to improve the road. "I understand the concerns," he said, "but we're a small 5-acre lot who is getting stuck between a rock and a hard place." Romanello encouraged citizens to complain to the county rather than deny a business fair use of the property. "I am very empathetic to the problems with the road there," he said, "but I'm hoping these 188 people call the county and complain," and added, "why put a stranglehold on a loyal business with something that is a county issue?"

King and Kimple did not vote against the annexation but voted against the zoning. King explained he was fine with the applicant's use of the property but concerned that it could be sold and

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used for purposes he didn't like. "I don't want to be tied to a rezoning," Kimple added, "My concern is safety and accessibility; that road is just inadequate." Though Abbott voted for the first ordinance, she voted against the second without giving a reason why. "[Since] the annexation passed but the zoning didn't," Cole explained, "the applicant has the right to pull out." King asked, "Can we have more discussion on this?" The council then motioned to reconsider and table the decisions till the next council meeting.

An executive session, public hearing, resolution and two ordinances were on the Feb. 21 agenda but removed at the beginning of the meeting due to the announcement that Beacon Lite LLC withdrew its application for annexation into the town of Monument. A reason for withdrawal was not given. Beacon Lite LLC remains in the county.

XL3 rigging

A similar ordinance passed 5-0. Ordinance No. 04-2023 read, "An Ordinance Amending the Official Zoning Map of the Town of Monument Rezoning 5.0 Acres From Commercial Center (CC) Zone District to Light Industrial (LI) Zone Dis-

trict for Property Known as XL3 Rigging Located on Beacon Lite Road Consisting of 5.0 Acres." Snow presented details of the application.

Like Beacon Lite LLC, XL3 Rigging is a 5-acre parcel located along Beacon Lite Road, presently vacant and zoned commercial with the county,

whose applicant would like to develop within Monument like other light industrial properties along the road. The Planning Commission

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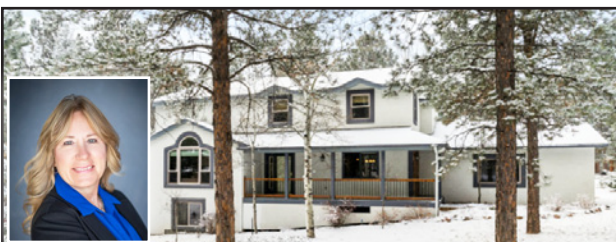
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Above: Deputy Town Clerk Tina Erickson gave the oath of office to two new Monument Town Council members at the council meeting on Feb. 21. (L to R) Marco Fiorito and Laura Kronick were sworn in to fill two vacancies caused by the resignation of Redmond Ramos and the promotion of Mitch LaKind to mayor. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.*

vides equipment-moving services to companies throughout Colorado.” The land use would consist of F-150s and small trucks.

Questions from the council led to a disagreement over trees. King asked, “How can we save the trees?” and referenced the town municipal code to give Director Sheila Booth the authority to approve or deny removal of the trees. Kimple added concerns for trees being removed along Interstate 25. LaKind countered, “I’m more concerned about the residents on the west side than what the view is by people driving by at 75 miles per hour on the east side.” He added, “If [the applicant] goes commercial [with the county], they’d be able to take all the trees down.” Kimple did not reply.

Before voting, King explained, “In fairness to the last applicant [Beacon Lite LLC], I am in favor of this project [XL3 Rigging] as it sits in front of us, which is the reason I am voting yes, in that those trees get saved.” The ordinance passed unanimously.

Discussion of state control of local zoning

The council discussed concern over a proposed state initiative to take control of zoning decisions from local municipalities like Monument. King brought up the issue. “There is an agenda from the current governor that wants to increase high-density housing. The biggest problem is [the state] changing the zoning requirements that takes away our local control. We believe in local control, but we need participation from our local community to write letters and push back.”

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unanimously approved the rezoning of Light Industrial and the staff approved. Brett Leveque of XL3 Rigging explained to the board that the company consisted of six employees with an expected traffic of 30 trips per day. The rigging “pro-

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“It’s the idea of losing local control, which we literally got just a month ago,” LaKind added before asking residents to voice their concerns to their state representatives. Romanello proposed that a proclamation be written opposing the initiative, and to encourage the county commissioners to do the same. Kronick asked, “Is there any type of template we can direct to residents?” King volunteered to draft a template. A citizen asked that the Town Council publish information about the high-density laws coming from the state.

Investigation discussed in executive sessions

Both council meetings in February went into executive sessions to receive legal advice from the new interim lawyer on specific questions relating to the report of investigation findings dated Dec. 28. The report made accusations of impropriety and recommended censuring councilmembers and

firing the town manager. Since the findings were released, several decisions were made without legal representation, including moving forward with the elected charter and rescinding the town meetings that publicly discussed details of the investigation. LaKind promised to continue the investigation under his tenure but insisted on setting new legal counsel in place before proceeding. Attorney Cole is advising the Town Council on how to proceed.

The Monument Town Council usually meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The next two regular meetings are scheduled for Monday, March 6 and Monday, March 20. Call 719-884-8014 or see www.townofmonument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see [\[townco.minutesondemand.com\]\(http://townco.minutesondemand.com\) and click on Town Council.](http://monument-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Chris Jeub can be reached at chrisjeub@ocn.me.



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D38 (Cont. from 1)

April 22, a Saturday. He recommended that the board finalize its selection of a replacement on April 17 at its regular meeting.

Board Secretary Tiffiney Upchurch commented that the community should be involved in the process.

Somers responded that the process would be finalized at the March 7 board work session. He recommended that there will be an application process during March and public interviews in early April. Public notice of the vacancy will be sent out via Our Community News and the Tribune.

Somers recommended that the interviews be conducted following the April work session, in which case all members of the board

would be present and the public would be welcome to attend.

Once the appointment is made, the new board will elect officers.

In their board member comments, all members thanked Taylor for his leadership and effort in his years on the board.

Financial discussion

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway explained to the board how the one-time compensation action was reflected in the use of the general fund.

He explained that February is the low point in the revenue cycle for the district because property taxes are not received until March. Consequently, the district is a bit behind on revenue and expenses.

Board Treasurer Ron Schwarz commented that if the district re-

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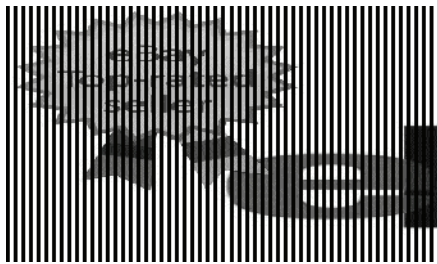
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Above: At the Feb. 21 D38 school board meeting, President Chris Taylor announced that he was resigning effective that night because his family was moving out of

state. Superintendent KC Somers and fellow board members Ron Schwarz, Matt Clawson, Tiffiney Upchurch, and Theresa Phillips expressed their gratitude for Taylor's hard work on the board. The superintendent, board members, family and D38 leaders in attendance at the meeting posed for a photo with Taylor and his wife Holly. Pictured from the left: Chris Coulter, executive director of operations and development; Davonne Johnson, Lewis-Palmer Elementary principal; Somers, Phillips, Schwarz, Holly and Chris Taylor; Upchurch; Clawson; Amber Whetstine, assistant superintendent; Peggy Parsley, outgoing Bear Creek Elementary principal; Brett Ridgway, chief business officer; and Mark Belcher, director of communications. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*



Above: At the February regular D38 school board meeting, Steve Waldmann, D38 chess team coach, spoke about the 16th Annual Lewis-Palmer School District Chess Tournament held Feb. 11 at Bear Creek Elementary School. Waldmann said this was the largest tournament, with 117 participants, and he appreciated the support from the district and all the volunteers who assisted at the event. The tournament was open to all students from kindergarten through 12th grade who live or go to school within the district's boundaries. Trophies were awarded to first, second, and third place by grade level for elementary students. Middle and high school students were awarded as a group. Seven of the participants who attended the board meeting were recognized. Attending were William Nedimyer, a second-grader from Prairie Winds who won first place; Brendan Buczkowski, a fifth-grader from Monument Academy who got third place; Kyle Fieber and Oliver Coberly, fifth-graders from Prairie Winds who tied for first place; Cole Temple, a Prairie Winds sixth-grader who won first place; and Nicholas D'Addario, a sixth-grader from Monument Academy won second place. Robert Collier, a ninth-grader from Lewis-Palmer High School, won first place out of 18 high school students. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

ceived all its annual revenue at the beginning of the school year, this would not be an issue.

In planning for the 2023-24 school year, the budget is reflected in documentation from the use of charts to detailed background information so that a variety of viewers could understand the situation, Ridgway said.

Taylor reflected that it is important to use this process to show how important the shortfall in compensation is. He said the deadline for deciding whether to request a mill levy override (MLO) on the November ballot is in August. This information could be used to inform the community in detail on how district resources are allocated.

Ridgway said that 92% of school revenue comes from the School Finance Act based on student count and per pupil funding. The level of funding in the upcoming school year is not yet known.

Referring to a 13-year history

of the district, Ridgway predicted that the student count will remain relatively stable. He said that a large portion of Monument Academy (MA) eighth-graders go on to Lewis-Palmer or Palmer Ridge High School, but MA expects to retain more of these students next year.

Somers commented that MA hopes to introduce athletics and other programs in an attempt to retain these students. Projections of population are based on letters of intent received from MA students.

Schwarz commented that secondary students cost more to support than elementary students, yet they receive the same per pupil funding. This should be considered in budget planning, he said.

Ridgway said that he is projecting a 5% increase in per pupil funding, but it may be as much as 8%.

Upchurch commented that Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds must be used by September 2024.



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Thirteen staff members are currently funded through ESSER funds. Ridgway commented that he will discuss with principals whether these positions will then need to be funded by the district or whether alternative solutions are available.

Upchurch asked when the board would approve new pay schedules.

Somers responded that an extensive cost/benefit analysis must first take place, but he hopes to have something to discuss at the March 7 work session.

District school calendar discussed

Assistant Superintendent Amber Whetstine reported that following discussions with the Staff Collaboration Committee and the Parent and Community Advisory Committee, a tentative calendar for the 2023-24

school year has been prepared.

Changes to the calendar include the addition of two full-day professional development days to replace five late-start days, closure of district buildings during winter break, a day added before the opening of the second semester so that teachers can prepare, and continuing to have May 17 as the last day of classes but reserving May 20 and 21 in case of excessive snow days.

Upchurch commented that because May 20 and 21 are a Monday and Tuesday, many families may already be on vacation. She suggested that the 20th and 21st should be included in the school year, then classes could be dismissed on the 17th if those days are not needed.

Whetstine said that

planning for the 2024-25 school year has begun, but since four-day weeks may be adopted it is difficult to finalize plans. She said that assessment days must be taken into account during the planning process.

New principal selected for Bear Creek Elementary

Somers introduced Donnell Potter as the new principal for Bear Creek Elementary School following the retirement of Peggy Parsley.

Somers said there were many applicants for the position and six were interviewed.

Potter has a long history in education as a teacher and principal in the Fountain district and District 11.

Potter said that his wife is a teacher in District 11 and all four of his children attended Bear Creek. He

said he is grateful to be able to spend time with Parsley before her departure and that he hopes the board and members of the school community will feel free to contact him regarding the school.

To view the presentations from this meeting, please see the district website, Lewis-Palmer.org, Board of Education, meetings, boarddocs. See the superintendent update for recognition of athletic and academic achievement by district students and teams.

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education meets from 6 to 10 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at the district's learning center, 146 Jeffer-

son St. in Monument. For further information contact vwood@lewispalmer.org.

Harriet Halbig
can be reached at
harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Family and Community Advisory Committee, Feb. 7

Committee learns about Lewis-Palmer Elementary School, legislative issues, and title programs

By Harriet Halbig

The School District 38 Family and Community Advisory Committee (formerly the District Accountability Advisory Committee) discussed a wide variety of subjects at its Feb. 7 meeting at Lewis-Palmer Elementary School (LPES). School presentation

Principal Davonne Johnson delivered an engaging presentation about LPES, introducing committee members to the aspects of school culture, which include a daily morning meeting where students greet one another, a brief sharing moment among them, and a brief game which involves all. The game demonstrated was the Left-Right Story Game, where Johnson provided several balls to committee members and read a story. If the word left was said, the ball was passed to the left. If right was mentioned, the ball was passed to the right. The results were a feeling of sharing among those involved and a positive opening to the day.

Lewis-Palmer Elementary School (LPES) has 407 students, 67 staff, and eight support staff. Its slogans are "The Road of Endless Possibilities" and "Go Eagles."

LPES' philosophy stresses that learning should be fun and enjoy an active partnership among teachers, students, and families to support this phi-

losophy. The community goal is to achieve health, joy and success for its students.

Board of Education update

Board of Education liaison Tiffiney Upchurch revisited the subject of board policy BDE, which involves restructuring of committees. Committees are now divided among three categories: those which are required by state or federal statute (such as the Parent and Community Advisory Committee, the Special Education Advisory Committee, and the Financial Transparency Committee), those which are created to address a specific issue such as the Staff Collaboration Committee (SCC), an ad hoc committee to encourage communication among all workforce groups and address solutions to funding following defeat of the mill levy override, and Community Task Force Groups, which are temporary entities addressing a specific issues such as the Portrait of a D38 Graduate.

Upchurch said the board has approved this new structure.

She said that the SCC has discussed the possibility of instituting four-day school weeks, changes in the district calendar regarding professional development scheduling, and restructuring of the district pay scale. The four-day

week would not be put in place before the 2024-25 school year if approved. The SCC works in collaboration with the business and finance department.

Upchurch then explained the legislative process and said there are 50

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District 7: Monument, Woodmoor and a portion of the surrounding areas (incumbent Jim Riggins)

The "Procedure for Director Elections and Member Voting" is available on MVEA's website at www.mvea.coop/annual-meeting.

To view a territory map with districts, visit www.mvea.coop/territory-map.

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- To be nominated by the nominating committee, please contact the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line at (719) 494-2528. If seeking election by nomination through the nominating committee, a candidate questionnaire must be received by MVEA to be submitted to the committee by 5:30 p.m., Thursday, March 16, 2023.
- To be nominated by petition, you must have the petition signed by 15 MVEA members. Petitions and procedures will be made available by contacting the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line at (719) 494-2528. The petition, along with a completed candidate questionnaire, must be received by MVEA by 5:30 p.m., Thursday, April 6, 2023.

A candidate questionnaire must be completed for either nomination by the committee or nomination by petition. If you have questions, please contact the MVEA Board Nomination Information Line.




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bills now being considered which involve education, including institution of universal preschool and universal free lunches, both of which would require hiring additional staff.

She has made several visits to the state capitol to lobby on behalf of the district and encouraged others to do the same.

Due to redistricting, D38 now has two members in the state House of Representatives. Upchurch has visited both and requested more funding so the district could better compensate its teachers. The onus is on the individual district to educate its community to support the schools. Only in this way can we ensure ongoing funding and influence our compensation in comparison to neighboring districts, she said.

Upchurch said D38 won't know until May what level of funding it will receive from the state.

Title programs discussion

Melissa Gibson-Steiner, coordinator of Special Programs, and Tiffany Brown, coordinator of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Educa-

tion, reported on the district's use of title funds.

Title I supports improving academic achievement of at-risk students. The funding of \$193,163 is being used at Bear Creek and Palmer Lake Elementary schools to provide reading intervention, before and after school tutoring, and assessments for students in private schools.

The McKinney-Vento Title I set-aside addresses the unique barriers which those experiencing homelessness must overcome. This funding ensures that those students have immediate access to public education and the right to attend their school of origin. Efforts are made to provide stability and support for these students and their families.

Title II supports provision of high-quality educators to improve achievement and greater access to effective educators. Funding for this year is \$92,643 and is being applied to literary coaching, Capturing Kids' Hearts, teacher mentors, paraprofessional training, and stipends for professional learning fa-

cilitators.

Title III supports improvement of the education of multilingual learners. This funding of \$14,018 is being applied to purchase supplemental materials, provide tutoring, assess language ability, and training and support for newcomer immigrants. It also helps to fund the annual international dinner.

Title IV supports academic enrichment and increasing capacity for programs. This funding of \$15,037 is used to offer access to a well-rounded education and creation of the position of coordinator of Learning Services to facilitate curriculum mapping of K-8 science and high school biology.

Strategic plan update

Director of Communications Mark Belcher reported on developments regarding the district's strategic plan, first created in 2020. The original plan included five sections: safe and healthy schools; world class education; value our people; fiscal stewardship and transparency; and relationships and communication.

In response to continuous input from stakeholders, staff, and oth-

ers, the strategic plan now consists of six sections with a newly added section on facilities and operations. This reflects the board's recent focus on analyzing the condition and replacement value of district resources such as buildings and buses and incorporating the information into the plan.

For detailed information on this and other presentations, please see the district website, lewispalmer.org, under Family Resources, District Accountability Advisory Committee, meeting content and the date of the meeting, Feb. 7.

The D38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee meets six times a year. Locations vary. The next meeting will be from 6 to 8 p.m. on April 11 at Bear Creek Elementary School, 1330 Creekside Drive in Monument. For further information, contact tmckee@lewispalmer.org.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Monument Academy School Board, Feb. 9

Board hears finance and mid-year COO updates

By Jackie Burhans

At its Feb. 9 regular meeting, the Monument Academy (MA) board heard an update from its financial consultant and interim chief operating officer (COO), discussed the proposed school calendar, updated the middle school uniform policy, and heard committee updates. After the meeting adjourned, the board heard from a parent about withdrawing her student to home-school.

Financial update

Glenn Gustafson, MA's financial

consultant, reported that he had been working diligently on integrating into MA's financial systems. He spent time in the past month on the annual bond deadlines for compliance reporting. He said he was working on payroll posting, the general ledger, and bank reconciliation. He noted that the board should have the quarterly statement in its new Colorado Department of Education (CDE)-compliant format. The new format, Gustafson said, is easier to read and shows the balance sheet, bond information, and school information with graphs

and charts. This will be more user-friendly for the board and community and will benefit the school in the long run, he said. The report will also be on the school's financial transparency page at <https://www.monumentacademy.net/financial-transparency/>.

Interim COO mid-year update

Interim COO Kim McClelland began by acknowledging the work it took to open MA in 1996 with 180 students and grow it into a thriving public charter school. She said her goal for the work that she and Gustafson are doing is to provide hope, sustainability, and cohesiveness.

The last strategic plan was done in 2016, and she wants to take that work and build upon it to provide a living document that will be updated and monitored. One key update she recommends is simplifying the mission and vision statement. Since she started, she has felt the need to bring the two campuses together as one unified community and build trust and collaboration between them.

McClelland highlighted activities in the previous 53 days, including revising financial systems by updating them for compliance, creating efficiencies, and beginning budget development. She also discussed ensuring the secondary campus complies with its bond covenants and reviewing service contracts to see if they are an efficient way to do business.

McClelland provided the following additional updates:

- MA will have its first high school graduating class next year and will continue to focus on character development and partnership with parents. MA will review the special-education process and working with the district. MA needs more

assessment data, more often to show results from beginning, middle, and end of the year on a dashboard. This would allow MA to fine-tune the academic program. She will review a draft of curriculum development policy with the curriculum

- She is conducting a survey of staff in elementary and secondary schools to make informed decisions and budget for devices since the Colorado Measures of Success (CMAS) testing is moving to devices only.
 - Saxon math is going away, so MA needs to determine a replacement.
 - Work on the modulares at East Campus should be complete by spring break. Both campuses need maintenance work. She is looking at staffing a facilities manager to cover both buildings and updating facility rental processes and costs.
 - MA needs to improve communication and consistency around discipline. She has started a discipline matrix with level one for classroom disruptions through level three for very serious matters. MA needs to determine how often and when it does in or out-of-school suspensions, follow state law while ensuring conversations with the social worker and counselors but leave room for administration to have decision autonomy.
- McClelland also touched on Title 9 training, the mandatory reporting process, enrollment, safety and security, the recirculation project at West Campus, athletics, outreach and communication with parents, outside committees and group alignment, the fundraising cam-



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paign, marketing and branding, and partnerships with the community and D38.

Updated calendar

McClelland reported that a survey of teachers showed a preference to stay with the current calendar and stay close to the D38 calendar. For the 2023-24 proposed calendar, some of the professional development days were moved along with the April teacher appreciation day off. She discussed using a new calculator to ensure MA complies with state contact hour requirements. She noted that extra snow days are built into the calendar but that if they were not needed, MA could adjust the last day of school. She also wants to create a draft calendar for the following year to allow people to plan.

The board unanimously approved the 2023-24 calendar for grades K-6 and 6-12 as presented.

Middle School uniform policy amended

President Ryan Graham noted that this was a formality based on the previous month's decision to allow middle schoolers to wear team athletic wear. Board member Joe Buczkowski said he did his best to draft changes to the policy that were approved but not codified at the last meeting.

Buczkowski added athletic apparel in its own section, saying that athletic polo shirts and fleece jackets may be part of the daily uniform and polos must be tucked in. He also took the opportunity to fix some small typos and font issues.

The board voted 5 to 1 to approve the policy as amended, with board member Emily Belisle voting no after requesting a discussion of some oversight for the potential duplication with fundraising groups in the school.

Public comment on reasons for withdrawing

After the board returned from a nearly two-hour executive session discussing security arrangements, a contract for school administration, and the evaluation of the interim school leader and finance team, it adjourned after taking no action.

The next agenda item allowed for citizen comments not pertaining to an agenda item, and Tanya Santiago explained why she had withdrawn her children to home-school them. She said she originally selected MA due to its stance against critical race theory and gender and identity confusion.

However, she became concerned when the middle school principal explained at an assembly why Capturing Kids Hearts was an amazing social-emotional learning (SEL) program. She said she shouldn't have to explain to a truly conservative school board why SEL poses such a huge threat. She quoted from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) organization that SEL is anchored in the notion of justice-oriented citizenship and discusses issues of culture, identity, agency, belonging, and engagement. She said that to her, that is socialism.

She also noted that a high school substitute teacher had their class debate the COVID-19 vaccine by physically segregating kids based on their opinion. She felt that no child should be easily identifiable as having been vaccinated or not and felt it was a horrible idea to have a debate class cover such a hot-button issue. When she spoke with Principal David Kennington, he asked her if she understood the classical education model that MA offered.

Finally, she noted that a suicide prevention program like Sources of Strength required student participation, raising the concern that if one student failed to recognize that another was planning to commit suicide, the damage would be irreversible. She also said the program was so secret that parents were required to go to the D38 administration building and leave their cell phone off so they could not photograph it.

She had a lot of hope for MA, she said, but it didn't work out so her kids would now be home-schooled.

Highlights

Board meeting highlights include:

- The board updated its list of authorized signers for its Integrity Bank CDs to replace those no longer at the school.
- Board member Craig Carle spotlighted three staff members: Loura Polen, Krista Pelley, and Lena Gross who dropped everything to help gather bond information that was needed.
- Graham reported for the Highway 105 committee that he would call a special meeting for the MA Building Corp. and the MA Foundation to execute documents with Wilson & Co. to allow the "recirculation project" to get started. The project is designed to have traffic go around the school and stay off Highway 105.
- Carle reported that the Lynx Fund Annual Campaign had raised 15% or \$75,000 of its \$500,000 goal. He met with a videographer to discuss creating a commercial about the fundraising goal.
- Board member Michael Geers

- said the West Campus School Accountability and Advisory Committee (SAAC) was working on its end-of-year survey, and the parent-teacher organization was recruiting.
- Belisle reported that the East Campus SAAC had reviewed its survey results, posted them on the website under the school board, and written a letter to the board with its recommendations. The letter noted a high level of satisfaction with academic progress and room to streamline communications between parents and teachers.
- The board set March 21 at 9 a.m. as the time for a 90-minute budget work session. The location is to be determined.

Correction

In the Feb. 4 edition of OCN, the MA article misstated that Graham was term-limited. In March 2022, the board amended its bylaws to clarify term limits and Graham can run for a second term. OCN regrets the error.



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The MA School Board meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of

each month. The next regular board meeting will be on Thursday, March 9, at 6 p.m. at the East Campus. See

more information at see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.
Jackie Burhans can be reached at

jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Feb. 9 and 23

Board hears proposals for Elephant Rock property

By James Howald and
Jackie Burhans

In February, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) heard four proposals for how to use portions of the Elephant Rock property (ERP). The Board of Trustees, the Planning Commission and the Parks Commission all had new members appointed. The board considered two issues regarding the taxation of cannabis, heard questions from a resident on water fund accounting and municipal code changes, and continued to refine its policy on short-term rentals (STRs).

The board also considered two resolutions on behalf of the Fire Department. It granted a special-event permit and renewed a contract with a stormwater consultant. Chief of Police Jason Vanderpool told the board about a grant the Police Department had received. Finally, the board updated the town’s zoning map.

The Feb. 9 and 23 meetings both ended with executive sessions.

Police and Fire Departments and Parks Commission present Elephant Rock plans

At the Feb. 9 meeting, Interim Fire Chief John Vincent and Vanderpool requested that a three-acre portion of the ERP be reserved as a location for a public safety building. They requested that the land adjacent to Highway 105 be reserved. Mayor Glant Havenar noted their request, but no action was taken at the meeting.

At the Feb. 23 meeting, the board heard three presentations from members of the Parks Commission about how to use a portion of the ERP as a public park.

Cindy Powell gave the first presentation. In her plan, which she described as “more involved,” a trail would be built around the perimeter of the park, and the Creek-side trail would be extended. The existing baseball field would be maintained and used for baseball and soccer. She proposed the land used for the park be placed in a trust specifying it could never be developed. She told the board she is working on grants to fund construction of the park and has met with the Mile High Youth Corps to seek their support, on a volunteer basis, to build the perimeter trail. She recommended keeping several of the existing buildings: the one with a basketball court, the dining hall, and the kitchen. She envisioned pop-up restaurants that would generate revenue for the town.

The next phase would be to fix up another building for the Palmer Lake Arts Committee to use for resident artists, art classes, and exhibitions. Powell proposed other existing buildings be rehabilitated in later phases of park development and said paid parking should be considered. She proposed a stage

similar to the one in Limbach Park in Monument for musical performances. Powell said, “I would love to have a mill levy or a bond, whichever is best, to put a public safety building” on the property.

Gene Kalesti presented what he called a basic plan for the proposed park. Kalesti proposed a first phase including a perimeter trail, an open-air pavilion, a dog park, community garden boxes, and two paid parking lots. A second phase would add a nature center, beaver ponds, and bridges that would be built by the Air Force Academy Engineering Department. Kalesti argued for opening the ERP to the public as soon as possible to let the town become familiar with it. Kalesti said five members of the Parks Commission voted in favor of his plan with the stipulation that a baseball field be added.

Reid Wiecks gave the final presentation. He pointed out that the mission of the Parks Commission was to develop and maintain parks and trails. He said the entire ERP should be put into a trust so that it never leaves town control. Wiecks’ plan includes a perimeter trail. He envisioned a unique “signature park,” different from anything in Larkspur or Castle Rock. Wiecks recommended demolishing most existing buildings, arguing they are a liability to the town, constantly vandalized, and 10 times more expensive to rehabilitate than to demolish. He wanted to keep the two cabins that are in the best shape. Wiecks pointed out not reserving all the ERP for use as a park risks seeing the land used for another housing development and that trying to fund any plan using grants, which are competitive, is a mistake. He felt ballfields are easily renovated and maintained.

Residents shared their thoughts after the presentations. Bob Parsons advised the board to go slowly, and he supported Kalesti’s plan, which he felt had an appropriately slow start. He was also concerned about increased traffic on Epworth Highway and Shady Lane. Loren Burlage, owner of a property east of the ERP, expressed concern that park visitors would feed his miniature donkeys.

Residents spoke in favor of and in opposition to including a dog park in the plan.

Paul Olivier, who served previously as the mayor of Palmer Lake, reminded the board that money and work would be needed to maintain the park. He pointed out that there had been plans for Centennial Park that had never been realized due to lack of funding. He warned the proposed park might fall into the same trap.

New board and commission members appointed

At the Feb. 9 meeting, the board in-

terviewed Nick Ehrhardt and Rich Keuhster to fill the vacant seat on the board resulting from Karen Stuth’s resignation. Ehrhardt told the board he grew up in Palmer Lake and had worked as an intensive-care nurse before joining his father Kurt Ehrhardt’s contracting business. He said he wants to build a resilient community. Keuhster said he had served as the town’s fire chief in the mid-90’s and had also served two terms on the board, including serving as the mayor pro tem. Kuehster said he was concerned about water supply, fire exposure, and developments in the town.

Trustees Shana Ball, Kevin Dreher, Jessica Farr, Samantha Padgett, and Mayor Glant Havenar voted in favor of appointing Ehrhardt; Trustee Dennis Stern voted no.

At the Feb. 9 meeting the board voted unanimously to appoint Tim Caves and Lindsey Zapalac to the Planning Commission. Caves and Zapalac will serve two-year terms ending in January 2024.

At the Feb. 23 meeting, Samantha Deeder was appointed to a two-year term on the Parks Commission ending in January 2025.

Cannabis taxes clarified

At the Feb. 9 meeting, the board reviewed the issue of excise taxes on wholesale cannabis. Town Administrator Dawn Collins pointed out that the ballot question established the excise tax at 5% of the sales price of wholesale cannabis but also allowed that tax to increase as high as 10%. Collins asked the board to clearly establish the excise tax rate.

Two owners of cannabis businesses—Brenda Woodward and Dino Salvatori—spoke to the issue. Woodward said she was concerned the tax could rise to 10%. Salvatori agreed that a 10% excise tax left no room for profit, and pointed out that he could only find 16 municipalities that charged an excise tax.

Attorney Scott Krob, standing in for Town Attorney Matt Krob, told the board it could not change the ballot initiative that went before the voters.

Ball, Farr, and Havenar said they wanted more research done before voting on the issue.

At the Feb. 23 meeting, Krob gave the board his opinion that the state statute establishes an excise tax of 5% and the board could not raise it to 10%.

The board voted unanimously to set the excise tax at 5%.

At the Feb. 9 meeting, the board took up the issue of sales tax on retail cannabis by considering Ordinance 5-2022, which establishes a 5% tax on retail cannabis sales. The board asked that this ordinance be brought back in final form at the Feb. 23 meeting. At that meeting, a final draft of the ordinance that left the 5% rate in effect and corrected

a reference to state statutes in the previous draft was approved by a unanimous vote.

Resident questions water fund accounting and municipal code changes

At the Feb. 9 meeting, the board discussed how much time Collins should spend responding to requests for information, given the significant number she has been receiving. The board agreed to direct Collins to spend about two hours per week.

Later, during the Public Comment agenda item, resident Roger Mosely said he had done his own calculations on what the water billing rate should be and asked that the board provide them to its new rate consultant for his consideration, which it agreed to do.

Mosely noted that the municipal code that was in effect until the new code was adopted on Dec. 8 specified that the board shall have control and management over all things pertaining to the water works system unless it had formally appointed someone to do so. He said he did not know if they had appointed Collins, otherwise the board that was in place before Dec. 8 had had that responsibility.

Note: The current code at <http://bit.ly/pl-code-water> says the water supervisor shall have control and management of all things pertaining to the water works system. Both the current and previous codes say that the town Board of Trustees shall have the power to prescribe all rates, rules, and regulations as necessary.

Mosely said he had two questions about the water fund. Question A notes that the 2022 budget for operations and capital expenditures totals over \$800,000, but the actual expenditure was less than \$200,000 and raised concern about the budget being off by 300%, asking what had been planned for and not done with the \$600,000 differential.

In his second question, he noted that the 2023 budget for the water fund showed a 2022 balance of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds of \$248,000, which he found suspicious because it was a round number and that while ARPA money is restricted to infrastructure, it was placed in the general fund. He said the town had only spent \$83,661 in capital expenses and questioned if the difference was due to bad accounting or mismanagement of funds.

Collins agreed to provide a general response over the next couple of weeks.

At the Feb. 23 meeting, Mosely raised additional questions about the water fund accounting. He asked why the 2022 water month-over-month report showed that year-to-date operations and capi-



Above: On Feb. 12, at the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, new board member Nick Ehrhardt was sworn in. Ehrhardt was appointed to fill the vacancy left when Karen Stuth resigned from the board. From left are Mayor Glant Havenar, Town Manager Dawn Collins, and Ehrhardt and his family. *Photo by Jackie Burhans.*

tal expenditures were reduced in November from a total of nearly \$350,000 to about \$120,000. He again asked about the difference between the \$83,000 YTD for capital expenditures vs. the \$248,000 balance noted in the 2023 budget. Thirdly, he said the spreadsheet provided by Collins detailing ARPA expenditures did not match the budget summaries.

Normally the board and staff do not respond directly to public comments. However, Havenar encouraged Collins to do so over Farr's objection. Collins noted that there are monthly adjustments and that not all invoices are available immediately, saying they won't have final figures until the audit as they are still addressing 2022 funds. She noted that there can also be human errors and that ARPA funds are not treated as typical revenue and can only be spent for specific reasons. She suggested that Mosely look into municipal accounting and talk to the auditor.

Padgett then asked to have Mosely's questions answered, including one he provided in writing about municipal code that was removed. Collins noted that she had previously provided the original code, the red line changes, and the new code to the board and could not speak to what was done under a different administrator, different lawyer, and mostly different board. Farr indicated that the board direction was to answer the questions raised by Mosely.

STR policy reviewed

Collins told the board there are 48 STRs licensed in Palmer Lake: 22

are owner-occupied and 26 are non-owner-occupied. She recommended that future requests for STR licenses that will use an accessory dwelling unit require a conditional use permit in addition to an STR license, which would require the Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees to review the license request. Accessory dwelling units are not addressed in the zoning code, she said. Collins also proposed reducing the number of STR licenses the town will grant due to complaints by residents that their neighborhoods are being overwhelmed with STRs. Collins recommended limiting non-owner-occupied STRs to 5% of the total residences in the town and limiting owner-occupied STRs to 10% of residences. She told the board that STR policy around the state is changing as towns and cities attempt to rein in the rapid pace of STR creation.

Vincent asked whether STRs should be considered private properties or businesses selling goods and services to transient customers. He said the fire code would need to be updated to address STRs. Havenar commented that she supported stricter regulations but was not comfortable with the idea of inspecting someone's home.

Havenar suggested a workshop to consider STR policy, and the board took no action following the discussion.

Fire Department resolutions

The board voted unanimously to approve two resolutions benefiting the Fire Department:

- Resolution 23-2023, which authorizes an agreement with the

Colorado Springs Radio Communication Division for that organization to service Palmer Lake Fire Department radios.

- Resolution 24-2023, which authorizes a record management software contract with ESO, a software company, to supply an integrated record management tool that will allow the Fire Department to retire two record-management systems and spreadsheets that are currently used for records management.

Special event permit granted

The board granted a special event permit to Little Funky Theater for a performance of *Steel Magnolias* on March 5 at the Palmer Lake Town Hall. The fee for the special event permit was waived.

Contract with Chavez Consulting LLC

Collins told the board that John Chavez had previously developed the town's plan for storm water discharge compliance. The board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 19-2023, which authorizes the mayor to continue the services of Chavez Consulting LLC at an hourly rate of \$150.

Police Department receives grant

Vanderpool told the board that the Palmer Lake Police Department had received a grant from the Gary Sinise Foundation that would pay for the purchase of a 2023 Chevro-

let pickup and for the installation of emergency equipment.

Updated zoning map approved

Collins recommended that the board approve a zoning map that would provide a starting point to work from to correct unlabeled or unzoned parcels. The board voted unanimously to approve the updated zoning map.

Executive sessions

The Feb. 9 meeting ended with an executive session to develop strategies for negotiations regarding an intergovernmental agreement, possible annexation, and sale of town property.

The Feb. 23 meeting ended with an executive session to develop strategies for negotiators regarding sale of town property and parameters for the Elephant Rock property.

No action was taken following the executive sessions.

The next board meetings are scheduled for March 9 and 23. See the town's website at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times and dates of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.



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Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District, Feb. 15

Audit officer search continues; replacement firefighters hired

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District (BFFRPD) meeting on Feb. 15, the board approved the hiring of a new auditor and heard that replacement firefighters had been hired. Some of the logistics duties performed by recently retired Deputy Chief James Rebitski could be handled out of district. Also, the board learned that the scarcity of parts for the 2005 Pierce mid-mount aerial ladder truck had further delayed delivery.

Director Kiersten Tarvainen attended via Zoom.

2022 audit officer update

Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn said she had contacted several audit companies last week and is waiting for price quotes.

Treasurer Jack Hinton said the district budgeted \$10,000 for the audit, but it is getting “kicked down the road” for larger audit jobs by Schilling CPA. Over the past three years, the district’s audit has consistently been late, and it was pushed back two months last year. Schilling was unable to visit the district staff last year, but after Hinton complained about the audit delay, the audit was presented at short notice by Dawn Schilling at the September board meeting, he said. See www.ocn.me/v22n10.htm#bffrpd.

Fire Chief PJ Langmaid said there had been a litany of excuses from Schilling, to include moving the business and the hiring of personnel that did not prioritize correctly. The audit needs to be completed by September to allow the district to establish the fund balance before developing the next budget, he said.

Hinton said the district ideally needs an auditor at the beginning of the year and cannot wait until the March board meeting to hire a new auditor. He requested the board approve a cap of \$12,000 to conduct the 2022 audit, and after the district receives price quotes, permission for himself, Langmaid, and Dunn to conduct interviews with potential auditors, with selection and hiring to be completed before the next board meeting.

The board unanimously approved the hiring of a new auditor.

Replacement firefighters hired

Langmaid said the entry-level testing had been completed in January, and three new employees were hired to replace the three who had left the department. The district received 54 applicants, but some applicants were not qualified to take the test and others did not have the opportunity to test. The district keeps a list of applicants that have completed testing for future offers of employment, but the firefighters at the top of the list are usually unavailable when positions become available, he said.

Deputy Chief of Operations Chris Piepenburg said there are many firefighting jobs available nationwide, and it is not like the fire service that he knew 28 years ago. The job search was tight when he entered the profession, he said.

Chairman Nate Dowden said he recently read a report that firefighters and emergency medical technicians are the second happiest people in their jobs, with physical therapists occupying the top position.

Vacant position undecided

Vice Chairman Jim Abendschan asked if the district would be filling the deputy chief of logistics position.

Langmaid said that he had not decided on the right course of action. The district is looking at all possibilities, and other agencies had approached the district about partnerships. Monument Fire District (MFD) has two full-time EMS staff that could place medical supply orders, reducing duplicated efforts. BFFRPD have an asset with Administrative Assistant Brooke Reid and could reciprocate by providing public relations support to MFD. The district is looking at the true pay scale for some of the tasks that Rebitski carried out. The fire marshal responsibilities on the development side could be handled by the City of Colorado Springs with the current memorandum of understanding in place, he said. See MFD article on page 14.

Note: Rebitski retired from the fire service in January after serving over 32 years. See www.ocn.me/v23n2.htm#bffrpd.

Financial report

Hinton said the district had about \$2.298 million at the end of January (includes four reserve funds totaling about \$704,000). The district received about \$64,600 in combined revenues. The district is in good shape and remains below the predicted budget expenditure for January, he said.

The board unanimously accepted the financial report as presented.

Dunn said the district received \$16,275 in ambulance revenue and paid \$69,461 for the annual liability insurance policy coverage.

Department liability coverage

Dowden asked how much general liability insurance coverage would be provided should a claim of negligence be made against staff rendering aid during duty.

Langmaid said the district has four separate policies, and all district personnel are covered, including the medical directorate and the board directors. He said he is fairly confident the district is fully covered, and by law the district is required to have coverage, he said.

Dowden said he is overly sensitive to litigation

against staff performing their duties, and the district must have protection against frivolous lawsuits. He requested that over the coming months the executive staff ensure the existing policy provides adequate legal protection.

Abendschan asked how many district firefighters were members of a local chapter of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), indicating another avenue for legal protection.

Langmaid said none of the BFFRPD firefighters were members of a local chapter. In order for a Local chapter of the IAFF to step in and help a member during a legal process, the community would have to recognize a local chapter and allow for a labor law, instead of the current compliant law, he said.

Fleet and facilities update

Langmaid said the following:

- The 2005 Pierce mid-mount aerial ladder truck is further delayed at Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus of Alabama due to the undelivered parts needed to complete the replacement waterway. According to district fleet mechanic Gavin Smith, the parts should take only one day to install. See www.ocn.me/v22n12.htm#bffrpd.
- The district had not heard any further information on the Ford chassis production. See www.ocn.me/v22n11.htm#bffrpd.
- The cabinets for the training room will probably be delayed, but he is doing a lot of the work on the renovation project for the training room at Station 1. The project is expected to be completed in April or May.

Operations and training update

Piepenburg reported that staff had completed 1,453 hours of training in January and said:

- The district responded to three working fires (two with Falcon Fire Protection District and one within the district).
- The department responded to a total of 104 calls for service in January.

Board director election update

Dunn said the district had received one nomination for the May Board of Directors election.

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Meetings are open to the public in person or via Zoom. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 15 at 7 p.m. For joining instructions, updates, agendas, minutes, and reports, visit www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at admin@bffire.org or call 719-495-4300.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Monument Fire District, Feb. 22

Community outreach/public information officer position approved

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Monument Fire District (MFD) meeting on Feb. 22, the board approved a new staff position and heard the fire technician position would be filled. The board requested a review of snow removal costs and received a presentation on three future station remodels and an update on the district training center. It also received an update on the ambulance service agreement with the Town of Palmer Lake.

Directors Terri Hayes and Tom Tharnish did not attend.

Community outreach/public information officer position

Fire Chief Andy Kovacs said the executive staff had been evaluating all the administrative needs as the organization grows, and future needs such as a mechanic, a data analyst to assist the accreditation manager, fire prevention staff, and an additional training officer. The community outreach/public information officer position would help the department be more efficient as an organization and allow executive staff to focus on primary tasks. The district identified a potential candidate for the position during the fire technician position interviews, but the position will also be open within the department.

Kovacs requested the board approve a community outreach/public information officer position and said a portion of the unused allocated wages from the recently vacated full-time administrative assistant position was available in the budget, and that position will not be filled, he said. See www.ocn.me/v23n1.htm#mfd.

The board approved the new position, 4-0.

Fire technician position update

Division Chief of Administration/Fire Marshal Jamey Bumgarner said the district received six applications for the newly created fire technician position. However, only four interviewed, but all were outstanding, and an offer of employment has been extended.

Kovacs said the position is designed for an entry-level person interested in pursuing a career in the fire service, and it is intended to be a revolving-door position. The fire technician is due to start on March 15, pending a background check and physical exam, he said.

Financial report

Treasurer Tom Kelly presented the January financial report and said:

- The overall revenue year to date was about

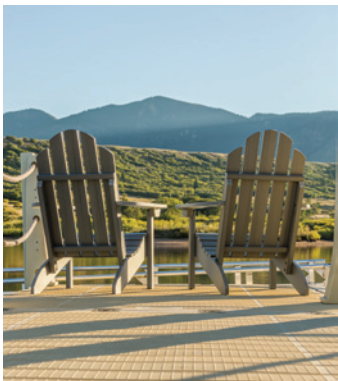


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MFD (Cont. from 14)

- \$225,906 (includes specific ownership taxes \$91,871, ambulance revenue \$79,866, and impact fees \$6,216).
- The district has projected an income of about \$16.5 million for 2023.
 - The overall expenses year to date were about \$1.2 million (includes administration expenses \$150,948, building expenses \$10,470, wages (largest expense) \$698,591, and benefits \$328,238).
 - The district budgeted about \$14 million in expenses for 2023.
 - The district has about \$11.5 million in total checking/savings (includes reserves and funds, and about \$3.7 million in the operations/general fund).
 - The district expected to receive a small amount of property taxes in February, and the bulk will arrive in March.

The board accepted the financial report as presented, 5-0.

Snow removal cost questioned

Vice President Roger Lance questioned the \$4,350 bill for snow removal from Greater Grounds Landscaping that was noted in checks over \$2,500 in the January financial report.

Director of Administration Jennifer Martin said the bill covered all five stations for January. Snow is only removed when it accumulates over 2 inches, and the rates are billed per plow, per hour, with extra charges applied for snow removal via truck. The district had received a lower-than-average bid, she said.

Bumgarner said the bill will likely be higher for February, because the snow piles are mounting and may need to be trucked away. The district does have a plow, but there is nowhere to push off the snow, he said.

President John Hildebrandt and Secretary Mike Smaldino both said the cost was outlandish and they had never noticed the snow removal amount in the financial report before.

Kovacs said it was never noticed before because it never exceeded \$2,500 per month when the district had three stations, but this is the first winter with five stations.

Hildebrandt said the board needs to know more data on how many times the stations were plowed, for how long and at what rates. At the current rates, the district could be charged as much as \$24,000 for six months of plowing, he said.

Kovacs said the bill included four storms, with plowing for 30.5 hours at \$140 per hour, which is less than the market rate. Maybe the fire technician could take care of snow removal in the future, he said. The district just needs to establish a vehicle that can handle the plow, which is currently attached to the 1997 Hummer. The district inherited the vehicle and plow during the merger process with Donald Wescott Fire Protection District, but the district is planning to sell the vehicle, he said.

Lance suggested the executive staff and the board discuss the plan for snow removal in the late summer or early fall, but the contract cannot be changed this winter, he said.

Kovacs said the district will request bids for winter 2023-24 and consider other options. In a couple of months, the district will ask the board how they would like to proceed, he said.

Station remodel presentation

Bumgarner presented the board with three remodel designs created by OZ Architects for Station 2 (Roller Coaster Road), Station 4 (Gleneagle Drive), and Station 5 (Highway 83/Stage Coach Road). The district allocated \$1 million for the remodel of Station 2 in the 2023 budget.

Smaldino requested OZ Architects revisit the design for Station 2 to include an additional bedroom and said he would prefer the board allocate additional funding if needed to accommodate a more flexible staffing model in the future.

Bumgarner said the design could be reconfigured, and he would revisit the plan with OZ Architects.

Kovacs said expanding the Station 2 footprint is difficult due to the lot size, and he envisioned Station 2 being a single Type 3 Engine station with four personnel rotating with a water tender or a Type 6/Brush Truck. The Station 2 ambulance service would move into the core of the district where calls are highest, and Station 5 would service that area of the district for ambulance service, he said.

Bumgarner said the remodel of both Station 4 and 5 allows for expansion of crew size. All plans are preliminary, and crews will be consulted before moving ahead with the remodels, he said.

Station 1 Training Center update

Division Chief of Operations Jonathan Bradley said the district had narrowed down a few potential companies to build the training/tower building. The partnership between the district, Colorado Springs Fire Department (CSFD), and Black Forest Fire Rescue Protection District is exciting, and ongoing discussions will ultimately shape the configuration of the training facility. The aim is to avoid the duplication of training facilities in the area. The training center will not necessarily be on one site, but rather spread around the north end of the county at three or four sites and use the different facilities of partner agencies. The district is exploring all the options for the training center and could still use a portion of the Station 1 site for trench extrication/rescue training, he said.

Bumgarner said the district budgeted \$500,000 to purchase land for a future Station 6/training center, and the district could purchase land for \$12 per square foot in an area zoned for light industrial use off Baptist Road, he said.

Kovacs said the district has identified a parcel just over 4 acres owned by the QuikTrip Corp. The owners have offered to sell the land for the initial purchase price. The 14 acres the district owns at Station 1, initially purchased for the training center, has generated interest from a Front Range repair facility, and the Town of Monument may also want to purchase some acreage for a park. The district may be able to recoup some costs toward the southwest site, he said. See www.ocn.me/v23n2.htm#mfd.

Palmer Lake ambulance contract update

Kovacs said that on Jan. 12, the Palmer Lake Town Council had unilaterally approved a 90-day termination notice of the intergovernmental agreement that provides ambulance service to Palmer Lake. Since the January board meeting, he said Dawn Collins, the Palmer Lake town administrator/clerk, had requested data showing past EMS service calls, ambulance transportations, and canceled calls (the district does not bill for calls that are canceled).

Hopefully a meeting will happen between both parties before the 90 days expire, and the contract can continue to provide a service that is mutually beneficial for everyone, he said. See www.ocn.me/v23n2.htm#mfd and [#plbot](http://www.ocn.me/v23n2.htm#plbot).

Chief's report

Kovacs highlighted the following:

- The Local 4319 has established a \$1,000 student scholarship to a student at Lewis-Palmer, Palmer Ridge, and Discovery Canyon High Schools. The local will work with school staff to identify students that demonstrate outstanding leadership and the district's three core values: character, connection, and commitment.
- Seven district firefighters are attending the CSFD fire academy in a class of 37 recruits.
- The district completed 732 hours of training in January.
- Lt. Chris Keough installed new mounting brackets in each ambulance to secure the cardiac monitors during transit. The monitors were previously secured with bungee cords.

The January chief's report can be viewed at www.monumentfire.org.

2022 annual report

Kovacs said the 2022 annual report highlights the district's achievements from the previous year. The report is intended to capture all the good things that happened within the fire district.

The report can be viewed on the district website at www.monumentfire.org, and copies are available at the district administration office located at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 102, Monument.

Lance said the report was a good document and very well done.

Board of Directors election update

Lance said that after further consideration he had reversed his decision and will run again for a board position this year. See www.ocn.me/v23n2.htm#mfd.

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at Station 1, 18660 Highway 105. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for March 22 at 6:30 p.m. Meeting attendance is open to the public in person or via Zoom. For joining instructions, agendas, minutes, and updates, visit www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District, Feb. 13

Board permits Monument Academy to build road to ease traffic

By James Howald

At its Feb. 13 meeting, the Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD) board granted Monument Academy (MA) permission to build a road on MA's property that crosses a WWSD easement. The board considered an amendment to its supplemental water agreement with the developer of Monument Junction. It also awarded a contract for a sewer saddle replacement project and discussed three other projects. The board heard highlights of operational reports, and the meeting ended with an executive session.

MA gets permission to build buffer road over sewer line

District Manager Jessie Shaffer explained to the board that MA, with El Paso County's assistance, is building a road looping around the MA West campus, on land belonging to MA, that will alleviate traffic congestion on Highway 105. Shaffer described the purpose of the road as "traffic storage." MA families had been using the driveway of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Shaffer said, but that access would be going away. The planned road would be built through

a Preble's meadow jumping mouse conservation easement belonging to WWSD and over a WWSD sewer line.

Shaffer told the board the conservation easement has been in place since 2002. He added the land in question was no longer considered to be mouse habitat, but the conservation easement was still in place. MA has the required permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Forest Service to build the road, Shaffer said.

Shaffer presented to the board an agreement that would give MA permission to build the road

and would indemnify WWSD against claims or liability resulting from the road's construction.

The board voted unanimously to authorize Shaffer to sign the agreement with MA.

Monument Junction to transfer supplemental water

District Engineer Ariel Hacker explained the background information regarding Classic Homes' request to transfer supplemental water from one part of its development to another. The Town of Monument required Classic Homes to reduce the number of apartments in the Monument Junction West development from 250 to 240, Hacker said. Classic Homes intends to increase the number of single-family residences in another part of the development from 120 to 129, and has asked WWSD to allow them to transfer the supplemental water they purchased for the apartments to the single-family residences.

Shaffer explained that supplemental water is supplied to a specific plot of land, so the request to transfer it requires consent from the board. He went on to explain the district's policy on supplemental water. WWSD provides 1/2 acre-foot of water per year for each acre of land at the district's standard rates, which is adequate for a single-family residence on a 3/4-acre lot. When a developer wants to build anything that requires more water, they must contract with WWSD to purchase supplemental water, which is much more expensive than the standard allotment, starting at \$29,000 for an additional acre-foot and rising to \$43,000 for larger allotments. In addition to the one-time charge, there is a monthly charge for water used, Shaffer said.

Following a brief discussion, the board voted unanimously to allow Classic Homes to transfer the supplemental water as requested.

Sewer saddle replacement contract awarded; other projects discussed

Hacker told the board she had received several bids from contractors to replace sewer saddles in the Forest subdivision, with Caraveo Construction Inc. submitting the low bid of \$303,593. Sewer saddles are vertical connectors that join residential sewer lines to sewer mains. She said Caraveo had done a similar project for WWSD last year with good results and she recommended that the contract be awarded to them.

The board voted unanimously to award the contract to Caraveo.

Hacker said another project to replace 30 saddles, five valves and three hydrants adjacent to Fairplay Drive had been put out to bid. She

also told the board that a total of five pressure reducing valves would need to be installed for the Monument Junction developments. She anticipated that work would cost \$250,000. Shaffer said a portion of that cost would be reimbursed by Classic Homes.

Hacker also discussed how the El Paso County-led project to widen Highway 105 might impact WWSD. First, a traffic roundabout would be installed on Knollwood Boulevard at the new west entrance to MA. The county is putting that work out to bid in February. Next, some WWSD water lines would be abandoned and many water and sewer lines would be rerouted. Hacker said she anticipated those changes would be "a big long project," starting with the portion of Highway 105 between Jackson Creek Parkway and Lake Woodmoor Drive, and then moving on to Highway 105 between Lake Woodmoor Drive and Furrow Road. A third phase would lie outside the WWSD service area, she said. Hacker added that the first two phases would take more than a year to complete.

Highlights of operational reports

- Operations Supervisor Dan LaFontaine said two bald eagles are nesting near Woodmoor Lake. The eagles are killing Canada geese, and a large bobcat or small cougar are cleaning up remains. The district is doing any further cleanup needed.
- The Cloverleaf development (previously known as the Walters family open space), is close to conditional acceptance and WWSD plans to provide three water taps a month until the end of 2023.
- Construction of a new well, Well 22, is slated to begin in spring of 2023.
- The Monument Ridge West development, in the northwest corner of the WWSD service area, has resumed its discussion about annexation with the Town of Monument.
- The Whataburger planned for the Monument Junction West development could be complete by summer of 2023, and the apartments in that development are not expected to be complete before 2024.
- The plan for the North Bay development, adjacent to the north side Woodmoor Lake, now specifies 30 single-family homes.
- A design for 52 units, some duplexes, some fourplexes, has been submitted for the Waterside development on the east side of Woodmoor Drive north of The Barn community center.

Monument Sanitation District, Feb. 15

Board appoints new director

By Jackie Burhans and James Howald

At its Feb. 15 meeting, the Monument Sanitation District (MSD) board appointed a new director to take the seat previously held by Director Laura Kronick. General Manager Mark Parker told the board about his meeting with an engineer working for Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) to discuss its possible use of the Tri-Lakes Waste Water Treatment Facility (TLWWTF). Parker covered additional topics in his Manager's Report.

Tony Archer joins board

Before the meeting convened, Parker administered the oath of office to Tony Archer. Archer joins the board to replace Kronick. Kronick accepted an appointment to the Monument Town Council, which prohibits its members from serving on other boards in the Town of Monument. Kronick also resigned from her seat on the Joint Use Committee, which oversees the operations of the TLWWTF.

Archer's appointment will continue until May 2, when an MSD board election will be held. Archer has filed a self-nomination form to run for the seat in that election.

Manager's report

Parker told the board that he met with an engi-

neer working for DWSD to discuss DWSD's possible use of the TLWWTF. The engineer asked Parker for an overview of the TLWWTF system and operations. He also asked for information about the TLWWTF's current processing capacity and biological oxygen demand, a measure of the amount of organic matter in water. The engineer told Parker DWSD's transition from its current waste treatment facility to TLWWTF would likely be slow and that DWSD would pay any engineering costs related to the switch of providers. Parker said he presented two ways for DWSD to make use of the TLWWTF.

Parker reported to the board on a recent update to MSD's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) software, which gathers, analyzes, and displays data generated by MSD's lift stations, valves, and treatment facility. The new version of the software alerts staff of events using texts rather than emails and can be operated remotely, Parker said.

Parker mentioned that a recent call for service to the MSD building's heating and cooling system had revealed a need to make changes in the building's attic to prevent extreme variations in temperature in different parts of the building.

Finally, Parker said that the repairs to pipe-

The next meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2023 at 1 p.m. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of each month at 1 p.m. at the district office at 1845 Woodmoor Drive; please see www.woodmoorwater.com or call 719-488-2525 to verify meeting times and locations.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

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lines on Raspberry Lane had been successfully completed.

Monument Sanitation District meetings are normally held at 9 a.m. on the third Wednesday of

the month in the district conference room at 130 Second St., Monument. The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 15. See <https://colorado.gov/msd>. For a district service map, see <https://colorado.gov/pacific/msd/district-map-0>. Infor-

mation: 719-481-4886.
Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me. James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Triview Metropolitan District, Feb. 16

Assistant manager hired; district receives \$3.4 million

By Natalie Barszcz

At the Triview Metropolitan District (TMD) meeting on Feb. 16, the board was introduced to the recently hired assistant district manager, heard about a large net in tap fees and public works fees, and declared a board director seat vacancy. The board received multiple updates to include the Northern Delivery System (NDS) project timeline and discussed various matters in executive session.

President Mark Melville and Vice President Anthony Sexton attended via Zoom.

Note: Several district residents interested in a board seat attended the meeting.

Assistant district manager hired

District Manager James McGrady said the board's December directive to find a qualified assistant district manager was complete, and he introduced Steve Sheffield. The idea is to train the Sheffield over the next few years and share the workload as the district completes the NDS project. By the time McGrady is ready to retire, Sheffield will be ready to take over as district manager, McGrady said.

Sheffield said he is currently working for the Town of Monument as the assistant Public Works director and will begin working for the district on March 13. Sheffield grew up in Colorado Springs and has resided in the district since 2001, having previously worked for TMD.

McGrady welcomed Sheffield and said he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience and is a great fit for the district.

Director resigns early

McGrady declared a board seat vacancy and said Director Marco Fiorito resigned from the board when he received a seat on the Monument Town Council. He suggested the board continue the discussion in executive session and either decide on the appointment of a director at the March meeting or wait until the May election. *See the MTC article on page 1.*

Sexton thanked Fiorito for serving almost eight years on the board. Melville made a motion to formerly thank Fiorito. The board unanimously concurred.

Apartment complex generates high revenue

McGrady said the district was able to net 276 tap fees and public works fees on the Thompson Thrift apartment complex, generating a total of about \$3.4 million in revenue for the district. The income virtually allows the district to pay cash

for the NDS project and avoid any long-term debt on the project. The apartments are located off Jackson Creek Parkway. A second apartment complex was approved on Bowstring/Higby Road, and that is expected to generate about \$4 million in tap fees and public works fees, he said.

Northern Delivery System

McGrady said the district had already ordered the valves and the pipes for the NDS project, but another amendment to the Kiewit contract would be needed because of the long lead times on materials for the pump station building and electrical equipment that could be anywhere from 50 to 70 weeks until delivery. Fortunately, the construction of the pump house is scheduled to begin at the end of the summer, and the pumps and electrical will be installed during the winter. The plans for the pipeline are at 100%, and Kiewit will begin the project in April, he said. See www.ocn.me/v23n2.htm#tvmd. For construction updates, visit www.triviewmetro.com.

Note: The NDS, in partnership with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU), will bring TMD-owned renewable water to northern El Paso County and the district. On completion of the NDS, the district will receive 80%-90% of its water from renewable sources and will be less reliant on non-renewable Denver Basin aquifers.

District manager's report

McGrady said the following:

- The district has finally received a building permit to construct a 330-square-foot pump station at the south reservoir. The construction will begin in March and is expected to take about four weeks. The goal is to begin depositing water once the pump station is finished.
- CSU has begun a direct and indirect potable reusable water return flow study. The study is designed to find a way to avoid sending flow to and receiving flow from Pueblo County. Alternate solutions designed to pick off the reusable flow beforehand could save about 5% of the water that is lost in transit.
- The results of the study could open some future exchange opportunities and savings for the district that were not possible in the past. The study is being fast tracked, and results are expected at the end of April.
- The roads in the Remington Hill development are scheduled for repairs beginning in April, with an overlay of asphalt planned for May.

Utilities Department update

Water Superintendent Shawn Sexton said the A4 well is off-line for routine maintenance. The last maintenance occurred in 2017, and the wells are maintained on a rotational basis. The almost annual sludge haul from the main water plant in Promontory Pointe is expected to take about three trips from the plant to a facility in Deer Trail, he said.

McGrady said it is expensive to deposit the sludge, and the district pays about \$20,000 per trip for a total of \$60,000. In the future, the district plant will be supplemental and won't be run much at all.

Note: The sludge is a result of the groundwater filtration system.

Public works, parks, and open space update

Superintendent Matt Rayno said the department is restabilizing landscape timbers along trails to prevent erosion occurring during the spring run-off. Crews are finishing up the concrete sidewalk at the north end of Agate Creek Drive that terminates in a cul-de-sac. The connection in the cul-de-sac to the trail system is too steep and the crews are making the slope compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, he said.

Superintendent Shawn Sexton relayed kudos from a resident that lives on the south side of Bear Creek Elementary School who said they were happy with the landscaping services.

Executive session

The board moved into an executive session at 6:35 p.m. pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 24-6-402(4)(a), (b), and (e), to receive legal advice regarding negotiations associated with water delivery infrastructure, water acquisitions, property acquisitions, and the Upper Monument Wastewater Plant Evaluation/Contract.

McGrady confirmed to OCN that when the regular meeting resumed, no action was taken by the board.

The board adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday every month at the district office at 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302. The next regular board meeting is scheduled for March 16 at 5:30 p.m. For meeting agendas, minutes, and updates, visit <https://triviewmetro.com>.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Donala Water and Sanitation District, Feb. 16

Donala to lease water to Martin Marietta

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

At its February meeting, the Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) considered a request from Martin Marietta to lease water from the district. A construction contract for a pipeline from Well 16A was approved and the board heard operational reports. The meeting ended with an executive session.

Martin Marietta water lease

General Manager Jeff Hodge said Martin Marietta had requested to lease DWSD's treated effluent water and was willing to pay a higher price for that water than the district was currently getting. Martin Marietta was proposing a one-year

lease, Hodge said.

The lease document specifies the water to be leased is treated reusable effluent discharged from the Upper Monument Creek Regional Waste Water Treatment Facility (UMCRWWTF). Martin Marietta needs the water to increase its discharge to the Arkansas River to offset losses from evaporation and use by its gravel mining operation.

The lease obligates DWSD to provide 135 acre-feet of water per year, and Martin Marietta to pay \$300 per acre-foot. DWSD is not required to provide the water if its prior obligations are not met for any reason.

The board voted unanimously to approve the

lease agreement.

Pipeline contract awarded

Hodge asked the board to consider awarding a construction contract to K. R. Swerdfeger Construction LLC for a raw water pipeline to connect newly drilled Well 16A to the R. Hull Water Treatment Plant. The engineering report for the project says the contractor will use directional boring under Bermuda Dunes Way, which will minimize impact on traffic. Some open excavation on DWSD's property on Pauma Valley Drive will be required. The bid from K. R. Swerdfeger was for \$292,302.

DONALA (Cont. on 20)

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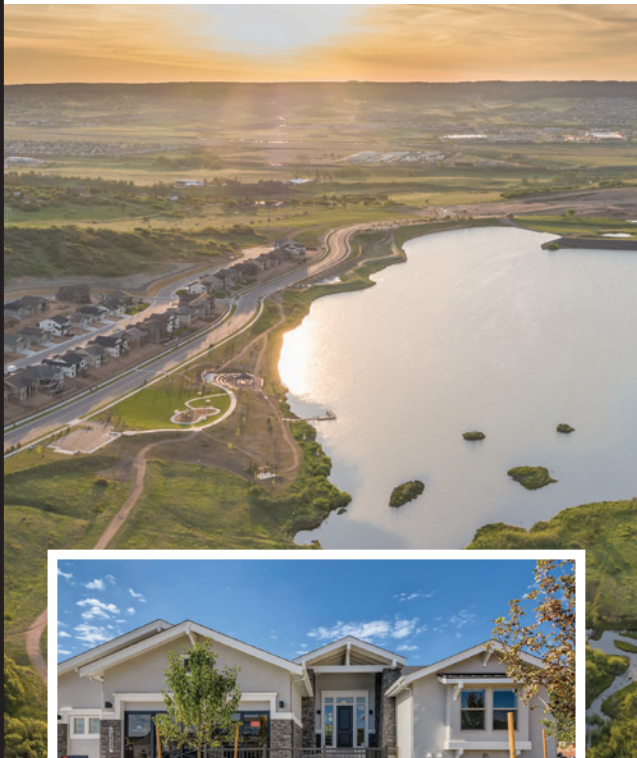
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DONALA (Cont. from 18)

Hodge mentioned that only one bid for the contract was received. He said other potential bidders lacked the staff to do the work.

Highlights of operational reports

- Hodge told the board he and one other staff member had received training that qualified them to enter the arsenic removal building.
- Chief Waste Plant Operator Mike Boyett told the board that the UMCRRWTF had a high

mercury result in its last round of testing.

Executive session

The meeting ended with an executive session to discuss contract negotiations with Colorado Springs Utilities concerning a long-term water contract and to receive legal advice on questions about the UMCRRWTF contract.

No action was taken following the executive session.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 16 at 1:30 p.m. Generally, board meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. and include online access; call (719) 488-3603 or access www.donalawater.org to receive up-to-date meeting information. The district office is located at 15850 Holbein Drive, Colorado Springs.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority, Feb. 16

Board adopts budget, awards testing contract

By James Howald

At its second regular meeting, the El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority (EPCRLWA) held a public meeting on its budget and awarded a contract for the water quality testing needed to establish a baseline for upcoming design work. The board discussed hiring a project planning and workflow manager and a request for proposal for a schematic engineering design report. The board also voted on five resolutions drafted by its attorney that address administrative matters.

Budget approved and funds appropriated

EPCRLWA President Jessie Shaffer opened the public hearing on the 2023 budget. On the revenue side, he said the four participating entities—Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD), Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD), Town of Monument (TOM) and Woodmoor Water and Sanitation District (WWSD)—had each contributed \$250,000. Funding from The American Recovery Program Act (ARPA) added an additional \$800,000, for a total of \$1.8 million. Shaffer anticipated spending a total of \$388,000 on accounting, legal and audit costs, surveying services, water quality and other studies, and two staff positions: a project manager position, discussed below, and a land acquisition specialist. Shaffer estimated engineering work, easements, and land acquisition would total around \$1 million. He told the board he estimated total expenditures for 2023, including contingencies and miscellaneous items, would be about \$1.775 million, leaving a balance of about \$25,000 at the end of the year.

There were no comments from the public and Shaffer closed the hearing.

The board voted unanimously in favor of a resolution to approve the budget and appropriate the required funds.

Water testing contract awarded

Three companies—JVA Inc., LRE Water, and Amaruq Environment Services—presented their water testing qualifications and their thoughts on how to handle EPCRLWA's water testing requirements to the board.

Brett Gracely, of LRE Water, focused on his

company's 50 years of experience in Colorado, and said LRE Water would optimize testing by removing analytes whose measurements were stable from the testing protocol to keep costs low. He said a dashboard would be provided to display results.

John McGibbon and Richard Hood, of JVA, said they would provide a certified water technician to collect all samples and would maintain a clear chain of custody of the samples to ensure the most accurate results. Hood said JVA's approach would focus on collecting the data needed to design a water treatment protocol in the future.

Andres Skibo from Amaruq Environmental Services noted his company assisted WWSD with water quality testing of Woodmoor Lake and was familiar with the local issues.

Following the presentations, Shaffer commented that in his opinion all three companies could do the job. He said Amaruq's bid was \$41,000 with no markup on lab fees, JVA's was \$48,000 with no markup on lab fees, and LRE's was \$49,000 with a 5% markup on lab fees. EPCRLWA Assistant Secretary Jeff Hodge, who also serves as the DWSD general manager, said using a certified water technician was important. Kevin Brown, representing CMD, also saw the value in a certified technician. Shaffer pointed out that JVA is made up of water treatment engineers, and that expertise would be valuable when the water quality testing data was used to design a treatment protocol.

The board voted unanimously to award the testing contract to JVA.

Project manager position and schematic design project discussed

Shaffer told the board he was working on a draft of a job description for a project planning and workflow manager position. The manager would be responsible for coordinating the activities of the engineers, consultants, and other contractors needed to complete the project. The EPCRLWA board members all have jobs with the participating water districts, which makes a project planning position necessary. The responsibilities would not include construction oversight, which

might require another person when the project reaches that stage, he said.

The board voted unanimously to authorize Shaffer to define and fill the position.

Shaffer said a request for proposal was being developed to have a schematic engineering design report written by an engineering company. The report would integrate the data collected in previous studies and would take the design to the next level of detail, addressing issues such as water treatment design, location of pumping stations, and so forth. The report is needed to increase the precision of cost estimates, Shaffer said. The report will determine exactly what each participating entity owns and what financing will be required. Brown said the report will include a full hydraulic analysis, including pressures in pipelines and pump stations and storage tank design. He added that the report would be required for issuing bonds to finance later stages of the project.

The board decided to proceed with development of the request for proposal.

Administrative resolutions passed

The board approved five administrative resolutions:

- A resolution laying out tasks needed to comply with state statutes.
- A resolution detailing compliance with the Colorado Open Records Act.
- A resolution indemnifying the board members for lawful acts taken in performance of their duties.
- A resolution authorizing online notice of meetings.
- A data privacy resolution that protects personal and consumer data.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 16 at 9 a.m. Regular meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road. Workshop meetings are held every Thursday at 9 a.m. at rotating venues. Please see loopwater.org or call 719-488-3603 to verify meeting times and locations.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Feb. 7 and 21

Citizen voices concern with county land development policy

By Helen Walklett

During February, a citizen voiced concerns about land use policy with the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The commissioners also made decisions relating to the Highway 105A project and the Jackson Ranch subdivision.

Concerns repeatedly raised over county land use policy

In recent months, El Paso County resident Tom Martin has raised concerns about land use development with the commissioners at both the regular and land use BOCC meetings.

Speaking at the Feb. 7 meeting, Martin said, "It seems that a lot of the developments that are going in, they don't deal with the surrounding

area. Just because I have a million dollars and I buy 20 acres out in Black Forest should never give me the right to put in cluster homes. This whole idea I have the right to do whatever I want with my property needs to go away. Your job is to enforce the master plan and the land code development." He continued, "You're just admitting that it's a free-for-all out there in the Wild West. This isn't good." He added, "You put cluster homes out on Vollmer Road. I'm not against development, folks. I just think we need smart, planned development."

Commissioner Stan VanderWerf responded, "Mr. Martin, I just beg to differ. You're implying that we have no requirements, that we have a wild, Wild West atmosphere with land use.

That is simply not true. There are thousands of requirements on the books that have to be complied with."

Speaking at the land use meeting later the same day, Martin said, "I think there is a considerable amount of work that needs to be done with the way we go about the land use in El Paso County. I think the master plan is much too vague." He continued, "All I can do is continue to try and bring up these issues over and over and over again. The community is screaming, 'Please be more responsible with your land use.'"

Martin spoke again at the Feb. 21 BOCC meeting, telling the commissioners that over the last few months "you've put RV parks next to two-acre ranchettes, you've put dog kennels in one-

acre subdivisions, you've rezoned rezones to put a hotel in Black Forest." He ended, "I want you folks to understand that we elected you to serve us. It's not what you feel. You should be responding to how we feel and what we feel is proper." The commissioners did not respond.

Highway 105A project

At the Feb. 21 meeting, the commissioners approved a temporary construction easement concerning property along the side of Highway 105 owned by Cade Weaver and Kayla Gilstrap at a

cost of \$630. The Highway 105A project will improve the highway to four lanes between I-25 and Lake Woodmoor Drive.

Other decisions

- Feb. 21—the commissioners approved the issuance of an ambulance permit to Monument Fire District. The one-year license runs until Jan. 31, 2024.
- Feb. 21—approved the final acceptance of the Jackson Ranch Filing No. 3 subdivision

- Feb. 21—approved an amended resolution to approve the service plan for the Winsome Metropolitan Districts Nos. 1-4 to correct errors in the original resolution. The districts serve the Winsome development at the northwest corner of Hodgen and Meridian Roads. The original service plan was approved by BOCC in July 2019.
- Helen Walklett can be reached at helenwalklett@ocn.me.

Woodmoor Improvement Association, Jan. 30, Feb. 1 and 23

Annual meeting, reorganization, and signage

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) board met on Jan. 30 for its annual meeting to elect new board members, review 2022 accomplishments, state 2023 goals, and recognize good neighbors. The board met on Feb. 1 to certify the election, reorganize its positions, and approve operational procedures. Finally, the board held its regular meeting on Feb. 23 to hear a request for trail names for the South Woodmoor Preserve open space.

President Brian Bush implored residents to store their trash cans after pickup and reminded them that open fires are prohibited and are subject to a \$5,000 fine.

Annual meeting

Bush opened the Jan. 30 meeting, inviting the audience to ask questions as he presented. The presentation is available on the WIA website at <http://bit.ly/wia-2023-annual>. After conducting the pledge of allegiance, Bush recorded the required proof of notice for the meeting, confirmed the quorum, and reviewed the rules of conduct for the meeting.

At the time of the meeting, four people had submitted nomination forms, residents could vote at the annual meeting, and ballots were scheduled for counting the following week.

Bush reviewed the mission of WIA to perform covenant and architectural control, maintain and improve common areas, and provide public safety. He also noted that WIA monitors issues in surrounding areas that may affect its residents.

Noting that board positions are unpaid, he introduced the 2022 board members and WIA staff. The WIA dues for 2023 have increased by \$8 to \$283 annually after considering the impact of inflation on salaries and the cost of improvements. The top three income sources were dues, new construction fees, and rentals. Top expenses other than payroll were common area improvements, maintenance, and forestry. Bush commended the WIA and WPS staff for holding expenses under budget. He noted that insurance was becoming more expensive, and if it continued to increase or was denied, WIA might have to close Toboggan Hill or drain the remaining ponds.

Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) services include immediate officer response, vacation checks, crime prevention, traffic control, 24/7 patrols, and interagency support and communication. In 2022, WPS had 12,000 on-duty hours, drove 72,200 miles, completed 12.556 vacation checks, responded to 945 calls for service, and more. WPS received \$20,602 in donations for vacation checks. Bush noted that, despite concerns about the recovery center on Woodmoor Drive, the El Paso County Sheriff's Office reported patient calls, parking complaints, and a few welfare checks, but "nothing of too much concern."

- Bush reviewed the 2022 highlights:
- Modest improvements to The Barn, including adding a small roof, refinishing the floors, and purchasing new tables.
 - Continuing support for the Safe Routes to School trail. The county prohibited using Lake Woodmoor Drive in front of the spill-

- way, so the D38 school district got another grant to build a bridge.
- Managing the \$245,000 matching grant for wildfire mitigation to facilitate the creation of a defensible corridor.
 - Four chipping days over two weekends that were free to residents.
 - Acceptance of the 65-acre South Woodmoor Preserve from the Woodmoor Open Space Committee LLC (WOSC). WIA will mow, mitigate, and spray for noxious weeds, upgrade two trails, and, eventually, add benches and pet waste stations, and raptor poles after resident input.
- For 2023 goals, Bush highlighted:
- Managing the final year of the fire mitigation grant.
 - Developing trails and enforcing community standards.
 - Administering covenants and design standards for the new Cloverleaf development of 131 homes.
 - Proactively managing the reserve fund so that future needs are planned and funded.
 - Continuing to digitize WIA files.
 - Scheduling two chipping weekends in June or July; they will be free to residents.

Top covenant violations include trailers on property more than 72 hours and barking or aggressive animals. Many issues are resolved with a friendly email or phone call without requiring hearings or fines. There was a total of 304 violations, which was down from 425 the previous year. Top architectural projects were repainting and deck replacement, with 634 total projects (down from 762), of which 98.2% were approved by the Architectural Control Committee or office staff.

Good neighbor award nominations were awarded to three couples: Peter and Carol Clark, Charles and Shirley Cooke, and Louis and Sue Plants. The couples were recognized for their kindness and compassion in looking after their neighbors and helping them with yard work, snow removal, and food deliveries. Each couple received a \$75 Home Depot gift card.

The meeting ended with a round of questions and answers on topics, short-term rentals (STRs), increased crime, updates on developments near



Above: Woodmoor Improvement Association held its annual meeting on Jan. 30 at The Barn to review accomplishments, set goals, recognize good neighbors, and hold its board election. President Brian Bush presided, with board members Ed Miller, Cindy Thrush, Steve Cutler, Peter Bille, Per Suhr, Brad Gleason, and Rick De Paiva available to speak and answer any questions. Photo by Jackie Burhans.



Above: President Brian Bush, right, recognized Peter Clark, left, and his wife Carol along with two other couples—Charles and Shirley Cooke and Louis and Sue Plants—as good neighbors. The Good Neighbor Award started in 2005 to recognize fellow residents whose generous neighborly deeds normally go unrecognized. The couples were recognized for their kindness and compassion in looking after their neighbors and helping them with yard work, snow removal, and food deliveries. Each couple received a \$75 Home Depot gift card. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

The Cove townhomes, water availability, and the level of Woodmoor Lake. Bush replied that Woodmoor covenants cannot prohibit STRs, but WIA does regulate them as a home business. Public Safety Director Brad Gleason said crime trends have increased in the county, but Woodmoor has seen only minor increases in thefts from open garages and vehicles. Bush noted that the latest plans for North Bay included 30 single-family homes, and he had not seen any update on Waterside. Bush said, as the current president of Woodmoor Water and Sanitation Department (WWSD), it had enough water for a total build-out of 7,000 units, currently from wells but later from the Woodmoor Ranch. He confirmed that the developments on either side of Jackson Creek Parkway would be served by WWSD, which had increased tap fees and charges a premium for high-density development. Woodmoor Lake, owned by WWSD, had to be drained for some infrastructure development and will be refilled to its normal level by next year.

Board reorganization

At the Feb. 1 meeting, the board provided certified election results, which re-elected three members. The board re-instated and reorganized to the following roles:

- Brian Bush, President
- Peter Bille, Vice President
- Connie Brown, Treasurer, re-elected
- Steve Cutler, Common Areas
- Rick DePaiva, Secretary and Community Outreach, re-elected
- Brad Gleason, Public Safety, re-elected
- Ed Miller, Architectural Control
- Per Suhr, Covenant Control
- Cindy Thrush, Forestry

Woodmoor area developments

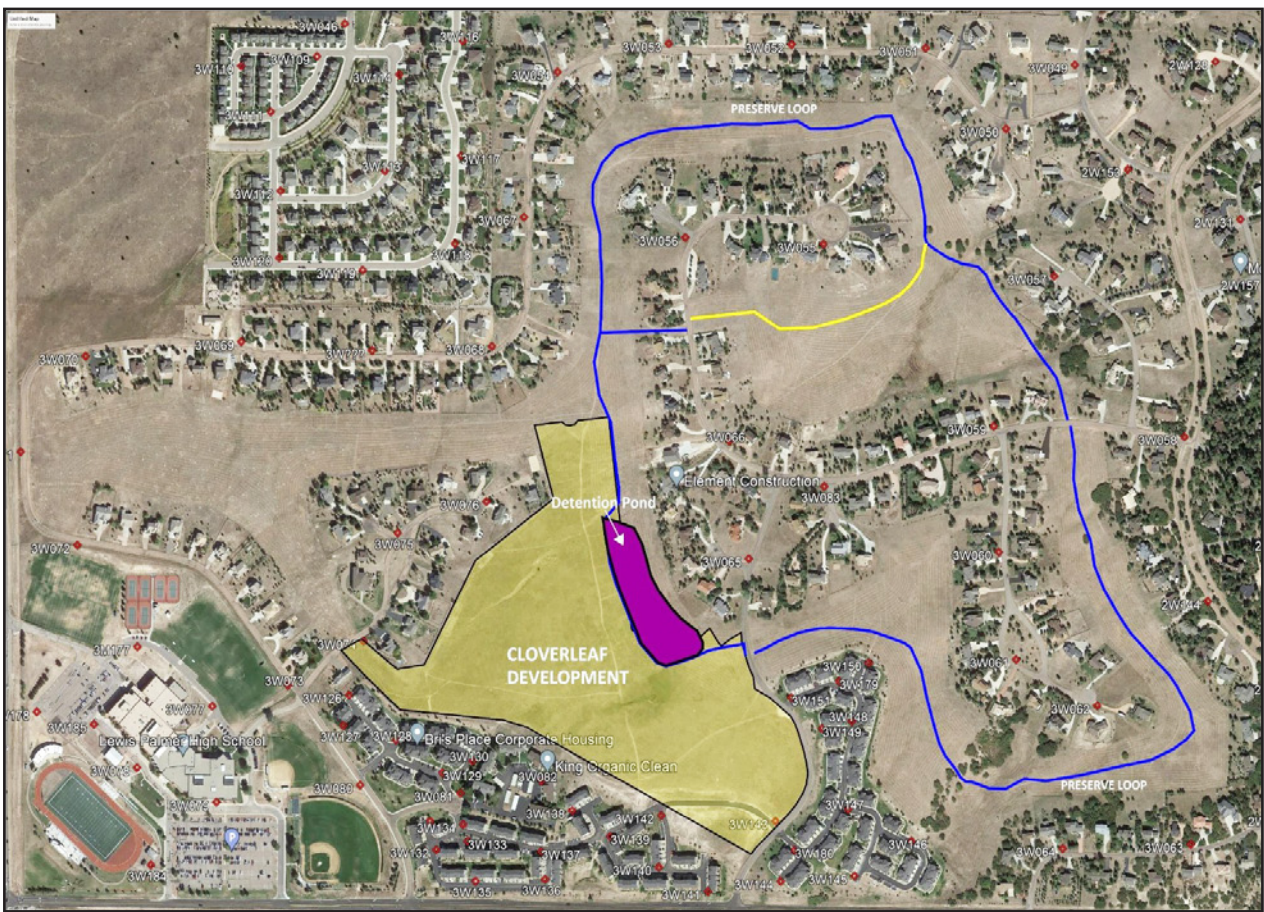
As a member of the Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO), WIA monitors new developments in the area and comments where appropriate. The board submitted comments opposing the back entrance/exit from the proposed Caliber apartments near Palmer Ridge High School. The proposal has since been withdrawn. The board submitted additional comments opposing the routine use of the back entrance onto South Park by the Brookmoor development. WIA has been working with The Heights property owners association (POA) to monitor the Monument Ridge East development. Finally, WIA weighed in on the new El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) traffic ordinance, but the BOCC passed the ordinance as proposed.

South Woodmoor Preserve signs

At the regular Feb. 23 meeting, the board heard from resident Tish Norman, president of WOSC LLC, about its request to name trails in the South Woodmoor Preserve (SWP). Noting that WOSC had been instrumental in preserving and donating the land, she presented the results of a survey by the members of WOSC on finishing unimproved social trails, naming connector trails, and concerns about bench, pet waste stand, and raptor pole placements. She said she had sent the 17-page document, including free-form comments, to Bush, who said he would share it with the rest of the board.

Norman said she had been told by the Architectural Control Committee (ACC) that WIA would not name the trails but was not given a reason. She said WOSC was not asking for trail signs but wanted to put the names on the approved map stands. Her concern was for safety, she said, noting that Emergency Medical Services (EMS) would have difficulty finding someone on the intermingled trails. Gleason noted that a 911 system would show the nearest house and that naming the trail would have no bearing on EMS being able to find someone.

Bush thanked Norman for her presentation



Above: The map shows the newly improved trail in blue in the South Woodmoor Preserve (SWP) open space recently donated by WOSC LLC to the Woodmoor Improvement Association. At the Feb. 23 meeting, the board reported that it approved its contractor’s suggestion to include the yellow “spur” as it would be more cost-effective and would result in less disturbance to the land. The SWP is near Jackson Creek Parkway and Higby Road, behind Lewis-Palmer High School. The map also shows the Cloverleaf development next to SWP. Map provided by Woodmoor Improvement Association.

and said the board would consider the comments from the survey. He explained that no other trail in WIA has a name and that the request included proposed trails that might never become trails. The board has 200 acres to shepherd with a finite budget, he noted, and had already undertaken significant work in the SWP in the eight months it has owned it. Thrush expressed her concern that this had been proposed and rejected four times and suggested that residents could add names to trail apps if they wished. She felt the board should put the issue to bed. Resident Jennifer Davis was not in favor of trail naming and thought designating them on apps was a good idea; she also thanked the board for its clarification on EMS responses.

Board highlights

- The board appointed Bush, Bille, Brown, and DePaiva as authorized signers on its financial accounts.
- The board voted unanimously to meet on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. following a 6 p.m. executive session. The November and December meetings will be moved earlier due to the holidays.
- The board also set its covenant hearing dates and appointed committee members.

- The board authorized the ACC administrator to approve certain projects, handle compliance fee refunds up to \$500, and handle routine change orders for all projects.
- The board authorized the director of forestry to review and approve tree removal requests and Firewise lot evaluations and appoint Forestry Committee members.
- Gleason noted that most red flag warning days, which indicate increased fire danger, occur in March through July and asked residents to check local media and the sheriff’s website for fire bans before using outdoor grills.

The WIA Board of Directors usually meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in The Barn at 1691 Woodmoor Drive, Monument. The next meeting will be on March 22.

The WIA calendar can be found at www.woodmoor.org/wia-calendar/. WIA board meeting minutes can be found at www.woodmoor.org/meeting-minutes/ once approved and posted.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

February Weather Wrap

By Bill Kappel

Overall, February was pretty close to normal, but it took a winding road to get to normal. Temperatures overall came out right about normal, with high temperatures slightly warmer than normal and lows right at average. Snowfall was slightly above normal as several of the snowstorms occurred with very cold temperatures and high snow/water ratios.

The first week of February was mild and dry with temperatures peaking about 10-15 degrees above normal on the 4th and 5th as highs reached the mid-50s. This also helped melt some of the snowpack that had built up during January. This warmth was interrupted by a series of cold fronts that affected the area starting on the 6th.

The first push of cooler air came through without any moisture, as the snow stayed in the mountains. Temperatures dropped to normal on the 6th and 7th. As the system departed, the back side of the storm swung through and pro-

duced snow and wind from the evening of the 8th through the morning of the 9th. Some decent snowfall rates occurred as well, with several inches accumulating in about two hours just before midnight on the 8th. Temperatures were cold behind the system with highs only reaching the low to mid-20s. Fresh snow on the ground and clear skies also made for efficient radiational cooling, and lows dipped just below zero on the morning of the 10th.

High pressure built in behind this system and brought in mild air from the west/southwest. Temperatures responded, jumping from the upper 30s on the 10th to the mid-50s on the 11th. Mild conditions stuck around through the next couple days as the west/southwest flow kicked in ahead of the next approaching storm system.

This next storm had more moisture to work with and again another shot of Arctic air, all just in time for Valentine’s Day. Snow started to fall by late afternoon on the 14th and continued through the 15th. During the storm, 4-8 inches

of snow arrived along with chilly temperatures. Highs only reached the teens on the 15th and dipped below zero again on the morning of the 16th. This storm also had a lot of wind, so significant blowing and drifting occurred, making for some tough driving conditions at times.

Just like earlier in the month, mild conditions quickly returned, with sunshine and high pressure building in from the west/southwest. This allowed temperatures to jump back above normal from the 18th through the 21st. Highs again peaked in the low to mid-50s during the period. However, the good snowpack helped to temper highs from reaching their full potential.

These mild conditions were again interrupted by the final shot of cold air for the month, and this was the coldest yet. A strong push of Arctic air moved in during the early morning of the 22nd, accompanied by a strong cold front, gusty winds, fog, and flurries. Cold air continued to deepen through the morning with snow starting to fall as well. The cold air resulted in light and

fluffy accumulations of 3-6 inches with plenty of blowing snow off and on during the 22nd and 23rd. Temperatures tumbled to the singled digits during the day on the 22nd and well below zero that night and the morning of the 23rd. But the Arctic air was shallow and began to drain from the higher elevations of the Palmer Divide during on the 24th. This allowed us to hit the low 40s that afternoon while lower elevations of the plains only reached the teens and 20s.

The remainder of the month again saw a return to mild conditions along with gusty winds at times. Conditions were dry for the last week of the month, with each day seeing average to above average temperatures. These gusty winds along with the stronger late-February sunshine also did a lot of work to melt our snowpack.

But don't get too excited, the next month is our snowiest time of the year.

A look ahead

March is known for a wide range of weather conditions in the region. We can see 70° temperatures one afternoon and blizzard conditions the next. Many of us remember the blizzard of March 2003 when we received 30-50 inches of snowfall that shut down the region. However, snow that does fall begins to melt quickly this time of the year, providing beneficial moisture for our plants as we head into spring.

February 2023 Weather Statistics

Average High	41.5° (+1.8°)
100-year return frequency value max	51.9° min 32.8°
Average Low	12.8° (-0.0°)

100-year return frequency value max	21.9° min 3.7°
Highest Temperature	56° on the 11th, 25th
Lowest Temperature	-11° on the 23rd
Monthly Precipitation	0.73"
	(-0.21" 23% below normal)
100-year return frequency value max	2.10" min 0.02"
Monthly Snowfall	19.5"
	(+1.8", 10% above normal)
Season to Date Snow	65.1"
	(-5.4", 8% below normal)
Season to Date Precip.	1.72"
	(+0.07", 4% above normal)
Heating Degree Days	1034 (-4)
Cooling Degree Days	0

Bill Kappel is a meteorologist and Tri-Lakes resident. He can be reached at billkappel@ocn.me.

Between the Covers at Covered Treasures Bookstore

March mystery madness

By the staff at Covered Treasures

"Good books don't give up all their secrets at once."—Stephen King

March is a month of basketball and spring break. It's also a great time to hunker down with some good mysteries, whether you are staying at home or traveling.

Standing Dead
By Margaret Mizushima (Crooked Lane Books) \$28.99

Critically acclaimed author Margaret Mizushima brings the eighth installment of her award-winning Timber Creek K-9 mysteries. Deputy Mattie Wray and her sister, Julia, travel to Mexico to visit their mother only to discover that she and her husband have vanished without a trace. Back in Timber Creek, Mattie finds chilling notes that lead her, Robo, and the sheriff's department to a grisly discovery, and the suspicion that her mother and sister are in danger. In a last-ditch gambit, Mattie must go undercover into a killer's lair to save her mother or die trying.



Saguaro Sanction
By Scott Graham (Torrey House Press), \$16.95

When Janelle Ortega's cousin is found murdered at a remote petroglyph site in Saguaro National Park, she and her husband, archaeologist Chuck Bender, are drawn deep into a threatening web of hostility and deceit stretching across the U.S.-

Mexico border and back in time 1,000 years, to when the Hohokam people thrived in the Sonoran Desert. Book eight in Scott Graham's National Park Mystery Series introduces readers to the landscapes and cultural histories of Saguaro National Park, providing an inside look at its wonders and archaeological and cultural complexities.

Exiles
By Jane Harper (Flatiron Books) \$27.99

Mystery follows federal investigator Aaron Falk, even on vacation in Southern Australian wine country. It's the one-year anniversary of Kim Gillespie's disappearance at a busy town festival, abandoning her baby. When Kim's older daughter makes a plea for anyone with information to come forward, Falk and his old buddy, Raco, can't leave the case alone. Falk is welcomed into the tight-knit circle of Kim's friends and loved ones. But the group may not be what it seems.

Finlay Donovan is Killing It
By Elle Cosimano (Minotaur Books) \$17.99

Finlay Donovan is killing it—except, she's really not. She's a stressed-out single mom and a struggling novelist, and her life is in chaos. When Finlay is overheard discussing the plot of her new suspense novel, she's mistaken for a contract killer, and inadvertently accepts an offer to dispose of a problem husband to make ends meet. Finlay discovers that crime in real life is a lot more difficult than its fictional counterpart, as she becomes tangled in a real-life murder investigation. This is the first in a witty new series.

My Sister's Grave
By Robert Dugoni (Thomas & Mercer) \$15.95

Tracy Crosswhite has spent 20 years questioning the facts surrounding her sister Sarah's disappearance and the suspect's murder trial. Tracy became a homicide detective and dedicated her

life to tracking down killers. When Sarah's remains are finally discovered, Tracy is determined to find the answers. She unearths dark, long-kept secrets that will forever change her relationship to her past and open the door to deadly danger. This is the first book in the bestselling series that has millions of readers around the globe.

How to Sell a Haunted House
By Grady Hendrix (Berkley) \$28

Grady Hendrix takes on the haunted house in a new thriller that explores the way your past and your family can haunt you like nothing else. Louise's parents have died; she dreads going home to deal with her brother and all the details. Unfortunately, she'll need his help because it'll take more than some new paint and clearing out a lifetime of memories to get the house on the market. But some houses don't want to be sold, and their home has other plans for both of them.

The Violin Conspiracy
By Brendan Slocumb (Vintage) \$17

Ray McMillian is a Black classical musician on the rise, undeterred by the pressure and prejudice of the classical music world, when a shocking theft sends him on a desperate quest to recover his great-great-grandfather's heirloom violin on the eve of the most prestigious musical competition in the world. Ray must not only reclaim his precious violin but prove to himself, and the world, that there has always been a truly great musician within him.

Until next month, happy reading.
The staff at Covered Treasures can be reached at books@ocn.me.

March Library Events

Enjoy our annual quilt display, participate in adult reading

By Harriet Halbig

As in many years past, the Palmer Divide Quilt-makers will display many of its creations in the library during March. The quilts will hang from the ceiling and be mounted on the walls throughout the library. A printed guide naming the maker of each piece will be available. This is a welcome, colorful event which many anticipate.

The Winter Adult Reading Program will continue through March 31. Upon registering for the program, you will receive a convenient tote bag, just right to carry a few books or a tablet. Upon completing 30 days of reading 30 minutes or more or participating in selected library programs, you

will receive the annual program mug and a Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory chocolate bar.

You can register online at our web site, ppld.org, or come in during open hours to register in person.

As tax time approaches, you can access federal and state forms on our website as well. From the home page, ppld.org, go to research, taxes and view the available forms. There is also information on free help with taxes.

We hope to see you soon at the library.
Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me

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Palmer Lake Historical Society, Feb. 16

Awake the Lake Committee describes mission

By Marlene Brown

On Feb. 16, the Palmer Lake Historical Society (PLHS) meeting led by Vice President Diane Kokes heard from the Awake the Lake Committee. Members of the committee explained the mission of Awake the Lake is to salvage, restore, and recreate the natural majesty of the name-sake of the town. Palmer Lake is the only natural lake along the Front Range. The Town of Palmer Lake was founded in 1871 by Gen. William Jackson Palmer and incorporated in 1889.

Committee member Jeannine Engle, former owner of the Rock House, gave a photographic history of the tiny town of Palmer Lake from 1820 when the Columbine, the state flower, was discovered along with Elephant Rock. Though Elephant Rock is privately owned, it can be seen from Highway 105 and the Santa Fe Trail that runs from Palmer Lake to Monument. In 1871, a telegraph office was set up in Palmer Lake and Hacket's Ditch was dug from Summit Lake to Palmer Lake to fill the lake because the railroad drained most of the water to run steam engines across the state. The Rockland Hotel was built in 1889, and in 1890 the first Chautauqua was held. Many people came by railroad for the event. It was \$2.25 round trip from Denver.

Jason Phillips, a graduate of School District 38, began the efforts to "Save the Lake" in the

'90s. Though he was only 10 years old, he was able to raise over \$10,000 to donate to the town to help refill the lake.

Linda Vier of Divide GeoAnalytics LLC monitors the six wells and reports to the town. She has tracked precipitation and evaporation of the lake since June 2017 and watches for significant water dissipation due to drought and other natural causes.

Jeff Hulsmann, owner of O'Malley's Steak Pub, reported that the railroad was still using steam engines up until 1950s. The lake had been drained and refilled several times. Even though Palmer Lake is a natural spring-fed lake, the use of the water for train engines caused the lake to be emptied. Water was brought from the reservoirs above the town in an effort to refill the lake.

In 2014, Chris Cummins, volunteer water attorney, worked to fight the railroad and filed for the water rights for the town. In 2016, the change of water rights was finally obtained. Though the railroad had tried to increase the size of the lake's footprint, the Awake the Lake organization decreased the size of the lake back to its natural state.

Several fundraisers include the Fourth of July Festival and .5k race. With over 1,000 runners, the 2022 .5k race raised \$37,000 in day. One of the group's accomplishments is the pedestrian



Above: The Awake the Lake Committee, from left: Jason Phillips, Jeannine Engle, Jeff Hulsmann, and Linda Vier. *Photo by Marlene Brown.*

bridge that crosses the tracks from the parking areas on the west side of the lake. Being able to access the lake without crossing the railroad tracks has been a true community effort. For more information and to make donations, go to awakepalmerlake.org

The next meeting of PLHS will be at the Palmer Lake Town Hall on the third Thursday of the month, March 16, 7 p.m., doors open at 6:30 pm. For more information, go to palmerdividehistory.org.

Marlene Brown can be reached by email at malenebrown@ocn.me.

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

Colorado in March is full of nature's surprises

By Janet Sellers

Every spring, I write about the dandy dandelion and its health benefits to eat as well as the benefits to our local soils and our planet. After a long winter of letting our landscapes as nature intended for our ecology to "nest in place" the dandelion is one of the first greens and flowers we see in March. The plant is a real lifesaver. It supports our pollinators as one of the first available plants.

Edible root to flower, the dandelion has traditionally been sought after as a culinary and important landscape plant. Not for exotic beauty, although it has been an important culinary and medicinal plant since ancient times in Europe. Dandelions were brought to North America (known as Turtle Island to indigenous peoples) by the European immigrants in the 1600s. They wanted to make sure they had an available food

and medicine source when they reached the New World.

Our hummingbird scouts arrive in March March marks the arrival of the hummingbird scouts to Colorado. Their migration begins from their warm winter homes in Central and South America. Nesting grounds in Colorado range from our local area for the broadtail hummingbird to Canada and Alaska for the rufous hummingbird. We see four kinds of hummingbirds in Colorado along our Central Flyway here in our Front Range area: broadtail, rufous, calliope, and black-chinned. Each of these passes through our area onto their nesting areas in higher altitudes.

Daylight saving time will start March 12. That means we'll have to adjust our clocks and ourselves to the changes it brings. Originally devised to help ranchers, farmers, and crops, it is

currently a support for golfers in golf courses. Michael Downing, author of *Spring Forward: The Annual Madness of Daylight Saving Time* purports that it is a money maker for golf courses and shopping malls but a disruptor for school children and most people, as they must go to school and work in the dark. While the clock does not affect our growing plants related to sunlight, the issue is more complex than that for the food industry and human life. According to some studies, there are higher incidences of a variety of health and heart issues due to circadian rhythm disruption.

Janet Sellers is a writer, artist, and speaker and enjoys sharing about the forests, mountains, and landscapes of Colorado. She offers Shin Rin Yoku meditative walks throughout the year. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Artists know how to share the visible and the invisible

By Janet Sellers

"I don't know why people are so keen to put the details of their private life in public; they forget that invisibility is a superpower."—Banksy

Our imaginations are invisible but powerful. We take in what we see and hear—and use all our senses—to make sense of our world and who we are. In art, the creators can visibly show or merely imply ideas to the viewer. That's the fun of it. That's the excitement of looking at art in person: The viewer has a personal connection with the art in their flow of the moment.

In weekly art roundtable discussions, I hear from art curators and art collectors from all over the world. They are enthusiastic about enjoying art personally and sharing their collections in novel ways. Art collectors locally and globally are acknowledging their profound interest in collecting paintings these days more than ever, and enjoying the art for themselves. No longer are collectors amassing mere assets of popularity. They are taking in artworks that are meaningful to them with a more personal approach to their

taste.

The aforementioned Banksy is a unique artist, with no curators but many interested collectors. It is hard to collect the works because they exist outdoors on buildings and structures to reach viewers. And publicly, no one knows who Banksy is.

Banksy makes graffiti creations that are so temporary that the very wall the artwork is put on has to be removed to keep and sell the artwork. Banksy's work is recognizable and highly critical of the wrongs of our world. Indeed, both Banksy and the artwork are hard to get hold of. Banksy is considered to be worth—by speculation of London's Dawson auction house—over \$60 million.

We are inundated with visual stimuli on our screens and phones to the point it is overwhelming. Seeing and appreciating visual art in person is the most enjoyable way to experience it. We can view art at our own tempo and move on or walk back to see artworks. Art lovers as collectors and as artists have always known this and



Above: Bella Art and Frame Gallery owners Maggie Williamson, left, and Ethan Ahlstrom, right, show off their new gallery space. They kept the tradition of their guest artist wall and individualized exhibit spaces, with over 40 artists represented, and have pedestals for freestanding sculptures. The shop is now at No. 11 Front Street Square, 251 Front St., Monument. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

have explored ideas to their outer limits. We are moving back from over-screened life to personal

control of our wall spaces and viewing at will via
real art on real walls in real time.

Janet Sellers is an artist, writer, and speaker. Her
paintings, sculptures, and digital artworks are

exhibited in the western U.S. and locally in Colo-
rado. Contact her at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Snapshots of Our Community

Lewis-Palmer D-38 combined band concert, Jan. 31



Above: The Lewis-Palmer School District presented its combined concert on Jan. 31 in the Lewis-Palmer High School auditorium. The Monument Academy Festival Band, conducted by John Patterson; the Lewis-Palmer Middle School Symphonic Band, conducted by Sarah Loyer; the Palmer Ridge High School Wind Ensemble, conducted by Raleigh E. Eversole IV; and the Lewis-Palmer High School Wind Symphony, conducted by Tom Chapman, performed separately. Then the combined band of over 100 musicians, conducted by Eversole, performed two additional

pieces. The logistics in transitioning from each band to the next were impressive and involved rearranging chairs and music stands and prioritizing the sequence of band sections to leave their seats in the auditorium to move onto the stage. Highlights included presentations by Patterson and Eversole about the history and evolution of music programs. Eversole began the music program at LPHS before transitioning to Palmer Ridge. *Photo by Steve Pate.*

"Grandmother" Tree at Fox Run Park



Above: The beloved tree in Fox Run Regional Park known to our Ute predecessors as "Grandmother" appears to open wide her arms to welcome her grandchildren back to the Ute summer home in the Fox Run Park area from the New Mexico gentle winter lands. There is a resting bench near the tree in honor of a contemporary family's grandmother. It seems many families enjoy the bench on a walk through the park. Grandmother tree seems to enjoy them, too. Do you have fond memories of Fox Run Park? When did you first go to Fox Run Park? Did you bring your children there? Did you take hikes there or play soccer or play on the playground? Friends of Fox Run Park would like your stories and anecdotes about the park. Do you have a fun story or memory you'd like to share with others? Contact the Friends of Fox Run Park at FriendsofFoxRunPark@gmail.com. *Photo by Janet Sellers.*

Scout seeks to honor WWII vets



Above: A Monument Boy Scout from Troop 17 is raising money to have a sculpture honoring World War II veterans installed at the Town Hall. Colin Saber, a 13-year-old eighth-grader at Monument Academy, wants to move artist Robert Henderson's sculpture of a P-51 Mustang aircraft from Fort Collins to Monument as part of his Eagle Scout project. Saber says his project was inspired by the recent death of Monument resident Col. Earl Depner (inset), who flew 100 missions in the plane as an Army Air Corps pilot during WWII. Saber wants to honor Depner and other veterans. Saber's fundraising goal of \$55,000 would pay for moving the artwork, installing it at the Town Hall, and other things. You can donate at this website: <https://p51monument.com>. *Photos provided by Colin Saber.*

Tri-Lakes Cruisers installs officers



Above: The Tri-Lakes Cruisers Car Club has installed its 2023 officers. They are (from left) Steve Gutman, Secretary; Don Ostrander, Vice President; David Whitlock, President; and Epifanio Maestas, Treasurer. They're preparing for the club's 20th Annual Benefit Car Show that will be held Aug. 27. For info on the club visit www.trilakescruisers.com. *Photo by Lon Wartman.*

Friends of Fox Run Park fundraiser



Above and below: The Friends of Fox Run Park joined Friends of El Paso County Nature Centers in a fundraiser for the new Fox Run Park Nature Center on Feb. 4. Nearly 500 people attended, and with the beautiful weather, they were able to roast hot dogs and marshmallows over a fire bowl at the gazebo. Games, a dog costume contest, and a parade were featured. The wagon-drawn hayrides through the park were a big hit. For more information on the nature center and how to donate, contact maryjolewis@elpasoco.com. For more information regarding volunteer projects in Fox Run Park, contact friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com. *Photos by Marlene Brown.*



Wildfire mitigation



Above: During the first weekend of February, Team Rubicon, a veteran-led disaster response group, conducted training and mitigation operations in northern El Paso County. Using the Monument Meeting House as a classroom, they trained 19 new chainsaw operators and then put them in the field for two days with 12 more experienced chainsaw operators to get practical experience with fire mitigation operations. Over two days, these volunteers removed a dozen dying trees and chipped several thousand cubic feet of scrub oak from a 4-acre lot in the wildland-urban interface. By creating a defensible space around properties, their volunteer efforts greatly reduced the wildfire threat to the entire neighborhood. In the photo, Dave LaRivee and Jack Hughes of Team Rubicon instruct some of their students in how to safely use a pole saw to remove dead branches from ponderosa pines. *Caption by David LaRivee. Photo by Sharon Williams.*

Ice fishing on Palmer Lake



Above: The town of Palmer Lake was a popular spot for ice fishing on Sunday, Feb. 5. In the background, a Burlington Northern Santa Fe engine can be seen travelling south with coal-filled freight cars. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

Mardi Gras at the Senior Center



Above: Silver Key at Tri-Lakes Senior Center hosted a Mardi Gras celebration Feb. 21 at the Grace Best location, 66 Jefferson St., Monument. Sue Walker, center director, provided games to entertain guests, and participants brought food, including shrimp creole, beignets, king's cake, and other delicacies associated with Mardi Gras. Line dancing and other activities followed at the center. To learn about future events at the senior center, please visit <https://www.silverkey.org/tri-lakes-events/>. *Photo by Mack Sharp. Caption by Steve Pate.*

CPR/AED/First Aid classes



Above: What will you do if someone collapses in front of you? Or if someone is injured in an accident or an attack? At a Heartsaver CPR/AED/First Aid class, instructor Carley Lehman had students practice when and how to perform basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation CPR compressions and breathing. Then they learned how to use an AED (automated external defibrillator) which can help those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. First aid for bleeding and other trauma followed. Finally, the class practiced real-life scenarios as Lehman kept adding twists and interesting variables. Three more classes will be offered in 2023 at Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church (TLUMC): April 8, July 8, and Oct. 14. We hope you will sign up and practice to be ready to help when emergency strikes. Write to André Mouton, leader of the TLUMC Emergency Preparedness Group, at epg@tlumc.org. Pictured: In a practice scenario in the church sanctuary, “a member of the audience at a choir concert” passed out and required emergency assistance. Some CPR class members “treated” the patient while others called 911, got the AED and first aid kit, helped the “distracted friend” of the victim, and shepherded audience members out of the way if they were not trained in first aid and could not help. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

Wildfire Neighborhood Ambassadors



Above: Residents of Black Forest Park, east of Roller Coaster Road in El Paso County, earned a free chipping day in 2022 when one of their neighbors, Steve Jeroslow, attended the Wildfire Neighborhood Ambassadors class, communicated with his neighbors, and organized the effort. The 2023 class kicked off Feb. 21, and you can still sign up and catch up. This is the third annual presentation of the series, which has trained 60 personnel in 30 neighborhoods in 10 different localities in Colorado, Montana, and Oregon. Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Emergency Preparedness Group (TLUMC EPG) is a 2020 national award winner in the wildfire mitigation arena and has conducted numerous wildland fire risk reduction projects. EPG wants you to do your homework in your yard and home before a wildfire comes here again! Write to André Mouton, leader of TLUMC EPG, at epg@tlumc.org. *Photo by Lisa Hatfield.*

Black Forest Boy Scout Chili Supper



Left: Bridger Nelson served chili when the Black Forest Boy Scout Troop 70 held its annual chili dinner on Sat., Feb. 25, at the Black Forest community center. In addition to the delicious chili and accompanying dishes, a silent auction also helped raise funds for the scouts and their community. *Photo by Creighton Smith.*

Palmer Lake Valentine's Dinner



Above: On Feb. 11, Palmer Lake hosted a Valentine’s dinner and dance event called “All You Need is Love” at the Town Hall. The Palmer Lake Fun Raisers!, an Awake Palmer Lake committee, hosted the event to raise funds to build concrete steps on the east side of the pedestrian bridge at Palmer Lake. The committee includes Laurie Caves, Cathy Wilcox, Tish Torweihe, Nikki McDonald, and Cindy Graff. Awake Palmer Lake is a 501(3)c organization that fundraises via various events to keep the lake and surrounding areas beautiful. The event featured a dinner donated by former Mayor Nikki McDonald’s company Catering by Nikky along with dance lessons. Attendees could purchase tickets for the dance only or for the full event. In the photo, Caves greets attendees at the front door. For information on upcoming events, see <http://awakepalmerlake.org>. *Photo by Jackie Burhans*

Bearbotics at State Championships



Above: Three Monument Bearbotics teams placed in the Colorado FIRST’s State Championship in Fort Collins on Feb. 18. Bearbotics FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) Team Beta got the second-place Innovate Award. Team Sigma earned the third-place Control Award, and Team Alpha scored the third-place Design Award. The high school students had to skillfully maneuver their robots through an electrical power substation game field to perform precision technical tasks using autonomous functions, computer vision, advanced software controls, and other techniques while avoiding collisions with the other three robots on the field. Each of the advanced robots was designed and built entirely by students, including the software. Bearbotics coach Jeanette Breton, in photo, was awarded a special Compass Award for giving outstanding guidance and mentorship to the teams throughout the year. *Photo by Mike Hinkle.*

Wildfire fuels reduction Phase II



Above: BARKO 930B excavators clear large swaths of dense Gambel oak, undergrowth, and some pine trees in the trail areas northwest of the memorial grove and south of Monument Fire Center in the Monument Preserve on Feb. 18-19. The second year of the U.S. Forest Service three-year project is well underway, with large areas already cleared. The project is part of an ongoing effort to reduce fuels that put the area at risk for high-intensity, potentially catastrophic wildfires for the residents living in the wildland urban interface. During Phase 2, trail users are advised to stay at least 300 feet from the areas being cleared because the excavators have been known to throw debris long range. The third phase is planned for winter 2024. For more information, contact the Pikes Peak Ranger District office at 719-636-1602 or visit www.fs.usda.gov. *Photo by Natalie Barszcz.*

Kiwanis talent show auditions



Above: Dozens of School District 38 students auditioned from Feb. 23-25 for the chance to compete in the Kiwanis Club of Monument Hill’s first Stars of Tomorrow talent show **March 19**, 2 pm at Palmer Ridge High School. They danced, sang, played musical instruments, and acted at Monument Community Presbyterian Church. Winners of the talent show on March 19 will be split according to school grade. The elementary school winner will earn \$500 and the middle school champion will go home with \$750. There will be scholarships worth \$1,000 and \$2,000 awarded to the high school winners.

Pictured from top to bottom and left to right: Contortionist Julia Branch, 11; drummer Kylie Huffman, 9; guitar player Wyatt Hyden, 16; singer Rose Helgoth, 9; bassoonist Raleigh Eversole, 18; and singer Ruby Taylor, 14. *Photos by Michael Weinfeld*

An important message for our readers OCN needs your help!

Our Community News is an all-volunteer organization. For the past 20 years, our volunteers have provided unbiased reporting on important local issues, including real estate development, fire departments, school districts, and water availability. We have provided a very favorable platform for advertising local businesses. We have published letters to the editor to allow you to express your opinions on events affecting the Tri-Lakes area.

Now we find that we have more tasks than we have volunteers. Some vital jobs where we could use your help:

- Reporters. Reporting on local meetings, what they talked about and what they decided.
- Mailing assistants. Counting and lifting tubs of papers to take the monthly mailing to the post offices and stacks of papers to local businesses, loading and unloading mailing tubs from a truck at two locations, preparing postof-

fice paperwork, tub labels, subscription labels, etc.

- Drivers. Driving a rental truck to various post offices once a month.
- Ad sales assistants. We need volunteers who love *OCN* to contact local businesses and encourage them to advertise in *OCN*.

The time and skills involved vary greatly from job to job. *OCN* will provide whatever equipment and training you need.

Please join us today! Meet a group of interesting and committed people. Learn new skills—use your enthusiasm and creativity to benefit our community and celebrate unfiltered information.

Please call Publisher John Heiser at (719) 488-3455, or email johnheiser@ocn.me to see how you can contribute. Contact John today! He is waiting to hear from you. Together we can ensure that *OCN* continues to provide a vital service to our wonderful Tri-Lakes community.

Our Community Notices

By Janet Sellers

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the information number for that event. Please notify us if your event listing needs to be updated.

Student video contest

The Colorado Department of Transportation is launching a statewide video contest for high school students to create a public service announcement on distracted driving. Students are invited to create their own anti-distracted driving video for the chance to win money and be featured in CDOT’s awareness campaign. \$5,000 prize pool awarded to the top entries. Submissions will be accepted from Feb. 15 to **April 10**, through CDOT’s Distracted Driving website, <https://www.codot.gov/safety/distracteddriving>.

Start and end times for D-20

New school start and end times were announced for D-20 for their 2023-24 school year. The new times are as follows: Elementary School: 7:30 am-2:30 pm; Middle School 8:50 am-3:55 pm (CMS: 8:20 am-3:25 pm); High School 8:10 am-3:15 pm. See www.asd20.org/announcements/new-startend-times-for-202324-school-year-2023-01-24/.

D38 free and reduced price school meals policy

Applications for free and reduced price school meals, instructions and an information letter to households are available at each school or online at www.lewispalmer.org/nutritionalservices.

Colorado Auto Safety and Traction Law

During winter storms, or when conditions require, CDOT will implement the Passenger Vehicle Traction Law. CDOT can implement the Passenger Vehicle Traction and Chain Laws on any state highway; the law requires specific tire tread depths, chains (or an approved alternative traction device such as Tire Socks). See <https://www.codot.gov/travel/winter-driving/tractionlaw>.

Winter Car Safety per CDOT

Make sure all vehicle systems are in

safe operating condition. Even locally, include: sturdy scraper/snow-brush, snow shovel, sand for traction, flashlight, tow strap, jumper cables or battery jump starter device, extra batteries, multi-tool (leatherman type), blanket or sleeping bag, gallon jug of water, first aid and essential medications, flares/reflectors to signal for help and warn other motorists, battery or crank-powered radio for emergency broadcasts. Checklist: <https://www.codot.gov/travel/winter-driving/winter-preparedness>.

The safety stop is now state law

Bicyclists in Colorado now have safe and legal options for navigating through intersections after governor Jared Polis signed Colorado house bill 22-1028 into law on Wednesday, April 13, 2022. The new law, which allows bicyclists and users of low-speed conveyances to treat stop signs as yield signs and stop lights as stop signs when they already have the right of way, goes into effect immediately statewide. Info: bikecoloradosprings.org.

Neighborhood safety

What qualifies as suspicious activity? “If you see something, say something.” It’s vital to report to local law enforcement. Suspicious activity can refer to any incident, event, individual or activity that seems unusual or out of place. Some common examples of suspicious activities include: A stranger loitering in your neighborhood or a vehicle cruising the streets repeatedly. Someone peering into cars or windows. Here’s what local authorities and Colorado Department of Public Safety says is needed information: Who did you see; what did you see; when did you see it; where did you see it; why it is suspicious. Call 911 or your local law enforcement agency.

Seniors Driver’s License

Electronic Renewal

With the implementation of the Driver’s License Electronic Renewal By Seniors Act (HB21-1139), Colorado seniors now have the permanent ability to renew their driver license or identification card online, but there are new laws to understand. Information is online via mycolorado.state.us. Some restrictions apply to drivers aged 21-80, and drivers over 80 need a special doctor’s statement. Coloradans who are concerned about an elder family mem-

ber's ability to drive should email dor_mvhelpdesk@state.co.us.

DMV online and kiosks

Clerk & Recorder's Office provides motor vehicle and driver's license services. 30+ services at mydmv.colorado.gov. Renew registration online or at a kiosk. Make appointments. check in for appointments and wait where it's convenient for you. The DMV encourages Coloradans to skip the trip and use its online services whenever possible. So before your next trip to the DMV, remember to save time, go online. Visit DMV.Colorado.gov/Save-time for more information. See epcdrives.com.

MVEA outage notifications

Please add your phone number to your MVEA account to streamline outage reporting and restoration notifications. To report an outage please call or text "OUT" to (800) 388-9881. Visit MVEA's Outage Center before the storm. There is information about preparing for outages, electrical safety, outage reporting, a link to the outage map, and more.

Free search for Unclaimed Property

Unclaimed property is tangible or intangible property that has had no activity for a specific period of time. Once the property is in the custody of the state of Colorado, the State will maintain custody of the property in perpetuity until the rightful owner or heirs come forward to claim. The State Treasurer's Office provides this service free of charge. Colorado: Great Colorado Payback - Colorado.gov (findyourunclaimedproperty.com) SAME AS: https://colorado.findyourunclaimedproperty.com/app/what-is-ucp

The Sunflower is for people with non-visible disabilities



Watch for green and yellow sunflower lanyards, bracelets, and ribbons, discreet ways to make the invisible visible. Wearing the Sunflower discreetly indicates to people around the wearer including staff, colleagues and health professionals that they need additional support, help or a little more time. However big or small, your help moves us closer to a society where people recognize that an offer of help, understanding and kindness can make a huge difference to the daily

experiences that a Sunflower wearer has.

Tri-Lakes Cares Needs Your Support

Tri-Lakes Cares is the only food pantry and human services organization located in and serving northern El Paso County through emergency relief and self-sufficiency programs. The community-based, volunteer-supported center is a critical resource for our neighbors in need. The best way to help support Tri-Lakes Cares is to donate. Visit https://tri-lakescares.org/donate to find out how to donate money, medical items, personal supplies, or food. Please check the web for current needs in our food pantry at https://tri-lakescares.org/donate/current-needs. Donation drop-off hours are Monday thru Thursday, 10 am to 4 pm. For more information about Tri-Lakes Cares or how you can help, contact Nicole Pettigrew, Director of Client Programs, at 719-481-4864 Ext. 111.

Free services for seniors

Mountain Community Senior Services offers free transportation and handyman services to Tri-Lakes seniors. Private transportation to medical appointments or a grocery store is now provided by Envida, 719-633-4677. If you need grab bars in the bathroom, a ramp to your door, or repair of stairs or railings, please call 719-488-0076, and leave a message or visit www.coloradoseniorhelp.com.

Senior Beat newsletter—subscribe for free

Each monthly Senior Beat newsletter is full of information for local seniors, including the daily menu of the senior lunches offered Monday through Friday at the Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Highway 105, Palmer Lake. It also contains the schedule of the classes and events for the month at the Senior Citizens Center and senior-friendly library programs. To subscribe, send an email with your name and mailing address to SeniorBeat@TriLakesSeniors.org. Senior Beat can also be viewed online at www.TriLakesSeniors.org.

Can you volunteer today?

- OCN needs your help. See article on page 28.
- Links to local organizations with an immediate need for volunteers are listed on the county's website, www.elpasocountyhealth.org/volunteering-and-donations, for groups like Care and Share, Crossfire Ministries, blood donations, Early Connections (volunteer from home opportunity), foster an animal, Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County, Salvation Army, Silver Key, and United Way (ongoing opportunities).
- The Colorado State University Extension office in El Paso County has several opportunities for

individuals interested in volunteering. https://elpaso.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-opportunities/

- Committed to building healthy, caring communities, these El Paso County volunteer-based and nonprofit organizations rely on the hard work of individuals like you. Reach out today and find out how you can play a part by becoming a volunteer in El Paso County. Get involved in El Paso County volunteering non-profits and organizations! https://www.americantowns.com/el-paso-county-co/volunteer-organizations/.
- The El Paso County Sheriff's Office Volunteer Program is composed of a collective citizens group with a true and common desire to partner with the El Paso County Sheriff's Office by volunteering their services while learning more about the internal workings of the law enforcement community. https://www.epcsheriffsoffice.com/volunteer-program-0.
- The El Paso County Volunteer Program is a wonderful opportunity for citizens to learn about the various functions of county government as well as give back to the community. The County's numerous boards and commissions need your experience, talents and time. https://boecc.elpasoco.com/volunteer.
- The El Paso County Fair started as a potato festival in 1905 and has grown into so much more. We will be celebrating our 117th Fair, July 16th -23rd! https://www.elpasocountyfair.com/p/getinvolved/volunteer-opportunities
- The Friends of El Paso County Nature Centers is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit whose mission is to support Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers. The organization is comprised of an executive board of elected officers and a general membership governed by official Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation as a 501-c-3 nonprofit organization. https://communityservices.elpasoco.com/nature-centers/nature-center-volunteers/
- Children's Literacy Center provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level! Tutoring is at the Tri-Lakes Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 p.m., and our Summer Session will run through Aug. 14. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or email Christine Jeffson at Christine@childrensliteracycenter.org.

Our Community Calendar

By Janet Sellers

Although we strive for accuracy in these listings, dates or times are often changed after publication. Please double-check the time and place of any event you wish to attend by calling the info number for that event. Please contact calendar@ocn.me with changes and additions.

GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

- **Forest Lakes Metropolitan District, Pinon Pines Metropolitan District 1, 2 & 3 board meeting.** Typically meets quarterly on the first Mon., 4 pm Meetings are held via teleconference. For virtual joining instructions and updates see www.forestlakesmetrodistrict.com.
- **El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) regular meeting,** usually every Tue., 9 am. BOCC land use meetings are being held every first and third Tuesday of the month as needed at 1 pm. View agendas and meetings at www.agendasuite.org/iip/elpaso. Meetings are held at Centennial Hall, 200 S. Cascade Ave., Suite 150, Colo. Springs. Info: 719-520-6430.
- **Monument Town Council meeting,** Mon., Mar. 6, 6:30 pm, Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees for remote attendance links.
- **Palmer Lake Board of Adjustments,** Tue., Mar. 7, 5 pm, 28 Valley Crescent St., Palmer Lake. Normally meets first Tues., as needed.
- **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 Parent and Community Advisory Committee** (formerly DAAC), Tue., Apr. 11, 6-8 pm, (No meeting in March), Lewis-Palmer Elementary School, 1315 Lake Woodmoor Dr., Monument. For further information tmckee@lewispalmer.org.
- **Tri-Lakes Wastewater Facility Joint Use Committee meeting,** Tue., Mar. 7, 10 am 16510 Mitchell Ave. Meets second Tue. Info: Bill Burks,

- 719-481-4053.
- **Palmer Lake Sanitation District board meeting,** Wed., Mar. 8, 9 am, call-in only: 650-479-3208, Access Code 76439078, 120 Middle Glenway. Meets second Wed. Info: 719-481-2732. www.plsd.org.
- **Monument Planning Commission meeting,** Wed., Mar. 8, 6 pm Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Meets second Wed. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment. Info: 719-884-8028. www.townofmonument.org.
- **Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting,** Thu., Mar. 9, 23, 5 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent, Usually meets second and fourth Thu. Info: 719-481-2953. www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **Monument Academy School Board meeting,** Thu., Mar. 9, 6 pm at the East Campus. 4303 Pinehurst Circle. Meets second Thu. Info 719-481-1950, https://www.monumentacademy.net/school-board/board-meeting-minutes/.
- **Woodmoor Water & Sanitation District board meeting,** Mon., Mar. 13, 1 pm, 1845 Woodmoor Dr., Monument. Normally meets second Mon. Info: 719-488-2525, www.woodmoorwater.com.
- **Monument Sanitation District board meeting,** Wed., Mar. 15, 9 a.m., 130 Second St. Zoom meeting. Find joining instructions on the website. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-4886, www.colorado.gov/msd.
- **Palmer Lake Town Planning Commission meeting,** Wed., Mar. 15, 6 pm, Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-2953, www.townofpalmerlake.com.
- **Academy Water and Sanitation District board meeting,** Wed., Mar. 15, 6 pm. Usually meets

third Wed. Public can join the Skype meeting: https://join.skype.com/PACujKTn7Nrh. Check the website for a link: https://academywsd.colorado.gov/notices-and-alerts. Meets third Wed. Info: 719-481-0711, https://academywsd.colorado.gov.

- **Black Forest Fire/Rescue Protection District board meeting,** in person or via Zoom, Wed., Mar. 15, 7 pm, Station 1, 11445 Teachout Road, Colorado Springs. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.bffire.org or contact Administrative Officer Rachel Dunn at 719-495-4300. Meetings are usually held on the third Wednesday.
- **El Paso County Planning Commission meeting,** Thu., Mar. 16, 9 am, Regional Development

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- Center, 2880 International Circle, Colo. Springs. Meetings are live-streamed on the El Paso County News & Information Channel at <https://www.elpasoco.com/news-information-channel>. Normally meets first & third Thu. (as required). Info: 719-520-6300, <https://planningdevelopment.elpasoco.com>.
- **El Paso County Regional Loop Water Authority meeting**, Thu., **Mar. 16**, 9 am Monument Town Hall Boardroom, 645 Beacon Lite Rd. Meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-3603. www.loopwater.org.
 - **Donala Water & Sanitation District board meeting**, Thu., **Mar. 16**, 1:30 pm, 15850 Holbein Dr. In 2023, meets fourth Wed., Check the website for the access code for the electronic meeting. Info: 719-488-3603, www.donalawater.org.
 - **Triview Metropolitan District board meeting**, Thu., **Mar. 16**, 5:30 pm, 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 302, Monument. Normally meets third Thu. Info: 719-488-6868, www.triviewmetro.com.
 - **Lewis-Palmer School District 38 board meeting**, Mon., **Mar. 20**, 6-10 pm. Normally meets third Mon. This meeting of the Board of Education will be live-streamed on the district's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/LPS-DCommunity, agenda, supporting documents at <https://go.boarddocs.com/co/lewispalmer/Board.nsf/vpublic>. Contact Vicki Wood. Phone: 719.481.9546 Email: vwood@lewispalmer.org Website: <https://www.lewispalmer.org>.
 - **Monument Town Council meeting**, Tue., **Mar. 21**, 6:30 pm, Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. Normally meets first and third Mon. Info: 719-884-801, www.townofmonument.org/260/Board-of-Trustees for remote attendance links.
 - **Woodmoor Improvement Association Board Meeting**, Wed., **Mar. 22**, 7 pm, Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. The WIA Board normally meets fourth Wed. Info: 719-488-2693, www.woodmoor.org.
 - **Monument Fire District board meeting**, in person or via Zoom, Wed., **Mar. 22**, 6:30 pm., Station 1, 18650 Highway 105, Monument. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at <http://www.monumentfire.org>, or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin, at 719-484-0911. Meetings are usually held on the fourth Wednesday.
 - **Donald Wescott Fire Protection District board meeting**, meets in person or via Zoom, every other month. Next meeting: Wed., **Mar. 22**, 4:30 pm, Monument Fire District Station 1, 18650 Highway 105. Meetings are usually held every other month on the fourth Wed. preceding the MFD board meeting. Find updates and Zoom meeting joining instructions at www.monumentfire.org or contact Director of Administration Jennifer Martin at 719-484-9011.

WEEKLY & MONTHLY
EVENTS

- **Northern El Paso County Coalition of Community Associations (NEPCO) meeting**, Sat., **Mar. 11**, 10 am-12 pm., Woodmoor Barn, 1691 Woodmoor Dr. Members of local HOAs welcome. Fire department merger and emergency planning. Usually meets bi-monthly second Sat. of the month. www.nepco.org.
- **The Centering Prayer Group at Black Forest Community Church**, first **Sat.**, 8:30-10 am The Old Log Church. Centering prayer opens and closes the meetings with discussion and fellowship in between; open to all. Contact Rev. Roger Butts, 719-433-3135, for information.
- **Half Day Prayer Group at Benet Hill Monastery**, first **Sat.**, 9 am-12 pm. All vaccinated guests are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
- **Monument Hill Kiwanis Club meeting**, every **Sat.**, 8 am. www.MHKiwanis.org, Monument-HillKiwanis@gmail.com for details, guests are welcome. service leadership clubs, Key clubs, Builders Club and K-kids at D38 schools. Empty bowls dinner and silent auction Oct. 12. Memberships open to the public. Info: RF Smith, 719-210-4987, www.MHKiwanis.org. See ad on page 3.
- **Neighborhood Net Ham Radio**, every **Sat.**, 10 am Amateur ham radio operators practice for emergencies on weekly repeater nets so neighbors can help neighbors. Sign up at www.mereowx.org/neighborhood-net or contactus@mereowx.org.

- **Palmer Lake Art Group**, second **Sat.** A variety of art programs are offered after the social gathering and business meeting. Guests welcome. 300 Hwy 105, NE corner of I-25 and 105. 9:30 am. Info: 719-460-4179, www.palmerlakeartgroup.com.
- **Lions Club Bingo**, every **Sat.** (except the first Sat.), 8:30 am-1 pm and first Mon., 5:30-10 pm Tri-Lakes Lions Club's portion of the proceeds benefit those in need in the Tri-Lakes community. Updated info and location: Jim Naylor, 719-481-8741 or www.trilakeslionsclub.org.
- **Tri-Lakes Parkinson's Disease Support Group**, third **Sat.**, 10 am-noon, Monument Community Presbyterian Church, 238 Third St., Monument. Info: Syble Krafft, 719-488-2669; Barry (group president), 719-351-9485. If you need any help, please call Syble or Barry.
- **Benet Hill Monastery**, Let us pray with you, walk in the forest, come up and visit prayer sites, every **Sun.** worship is 10:15 a.m., 3190 Benet Lane, 80921. See ad on page 3.
- **Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church**, every **Sun.**, 8 and 11 am traditional, 9:30 am contemporary. Both in-person (no registration necessary) and live stream at www.tlumc.org/live. Watch live or replay: www.facebook.com/tlumc, www.youtube.com/tlumc.org. Info: 719-488-1365, www.tlumc.org. 20256 Hunting Downs Way, Monument. See ad on page 2.
- **Fuel Church** Sunday Service, every **Sun.** Service times, 11:00 am Live service streaming at www.fuelchurch.org at 11:40 am on www.fuelchurch.org. Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake. Nursery and kids' service. Non-denominational, spirit-filled. Need prayer? Email us info@fuel.org. See ad on page 5.
- **Ridgeview Baptist Church**, every **Sun.**, 10:30 am, temporarily meeting at 9130 Explorer Dr., Colorado Springs, 80920. Info: 719-357-6515 or www.ridgeviewcolorado.org. See ad on page 6.
- **German Conversation Group**, every **Mon.**, 1:30 pm, Monument Library, 1706 Woodmoor Drive. Public welcome with Intermediate to Advanced German speaking skills.
- **The Forest Chorus**, first and third **Mon.**, 7-8:30 p.m., at the Black Forest Community Center. most months. The group supports community events, leading sing-along audience participation, and occasionally perform a wide variety of music for fun. For more information please email: blackforestnews@earthlink.net. Previous choir or barbershop experience is preferred.
- **Women's A.A. Step Study**, every **Mon.**, 6:30 pm, meeting remotely, check for details. Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 Baptist Rd. Park in west lot. Info: 866-641-9190. Al-Anon Zoom Meeting. Just for Today Online, every Mon., 9:00 - 10:00 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309
- **Al-Anon Zoom Meeting**, Just for Today Online, every **Mon.**, 9-10 am Zoom Meeting ID: 889 4142 7446, Password 349309.
- **Monument Life Recovery Group**, every **Mon.**, 6:30-7:30 pm, The Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek Rd. This faith-based support group is for those seeking freedom from all hurts, habits, and hang-ups. Daycare provided for children under age 11. Info: 303-946-2659, www.liferecoverygroups.com/meetings/life-recovery-group-3/.
- **Amateur ham radio W0TLM** (Tri-Lakes Monument ham radio Association), third **Mon.** All amateur ham radio operators or those interested in becoming one are welcome. Info: www.W0TLM.com
- **La Leche League** breastfeeding support group, second **Mon.**, 7 pm, . Partners and helpers welcome (and babies and kids, too) so we can meet our breastfeeding goals together. Black Forest Community Center 12530 Black Forest Rd, Colorado Springs, CO 80908. For more information, contact RachelKLangley@gmail.com.
- **Children's Literacy Center**, every **Mon. & Wed.**, 5:30-6:30 pm. Provides free one-on-one literacy tutoring to Tri-Lakes children in grades 1-6 who are reading below grade level. Tutoring is at Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St. Monument. For more information, to become a volunteer tutor, or to enroll your child, visit www.childrensliteracycenter.org or contact Rachel Morin, Tri-Lakes Senior Center Coordinator, CLC 610-246-1047 (cell).
- **Centering Prayer Group** at Benet Hill Monastery, every **Tue.**, 10-11 am. All vaccinated guests

- are welcome. Contact Sister Therese at (719) 355-1638 or (719) 355-1650 or stherese@benethillmonastery.org.
- **Essentrics Fitness Program** at Senior Center, every **Tue.**, 9 am & Thu., 10 am, Grace Best Education Center, 66 Jefferson St, Monument, CO 80132. Registration & info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241, www.trilakeseniors.org.
 - **GriefShare Support Group**, last **Tue.** of the month, 10:30 am-noon. NEW LOCATION: Tri-Lakes Senior Center, 66 Jefferson St. in the Grace Best Elementary School building. The Tri-Lakes Silver Alliance has partnered with Colorado Palliative and Hospice Care to host a 13-session grief support group in Monument. RSVP, info: Sue Walker, 719-330-0241.
 - **Senior Citizen Lunches**, Connections Café sites, every **Wed.** will have "grab and go" (prepared meals). A \$2.25 donation is requested. Call 719-884-2300 to reserve your meal. Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meals will deliver frozen meals for the week to Monument. Food Pantry offers a "pick up only" Mon.-Fri., noon-12:30 pm, Mountain Community Mennonite Church, 643 Hwy. 105, Palmer Lake. Reservations requested: 719-884 2300. Check the Silver Key @ Tri-Lakes website for events and schedules, <https://www.silverkey.org/tri-lakes-events/>.
 - **Colorado Springs Philharmonic Guild Listening Club**, third **Wed.** Free virtual event. Maestro Wilson will conduct monthly hour-long programs. RSVP at www.cspguild.org.
 - **Gleneagle Sertoma**, first and third **Wed.**, 11:45 am to 1 pm at Beasts and Brews, 7 Spectrum Loop, Colorado Springs. The longest continuously serving civic service organization in northern El Paso County features a program speaker addressing local topics of interest. Duane Gritzmaker, dwgritz@gmail.com or 719-649-9220.
 - **Senior Social**, fourth **Wed.**, 12455 Black Forest Rd. Info: www.aarpchapter1100blackforest.weekly.com.
 - **Tri-Lakes Church of Christ** Wednesday night fellowship classes, every **Wed.**, 6-7:30 pm, 20450 Beacon Lite Road, Monument (corner of Beacon Lite & County Line Roads). Info: 719-488-9613, gregsmith@trilakeschurch.org, www.trilakeschurch.org.
 - **Tri-Lakes Cruisers**, first **Wed.**, 7 pm. A nonprofit car club. Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, with numerous activities and events each month. Club membership applications are now being accepted and are available on the website: <https://tl-cruisers.weebly.com>.
 - **AARP Black Forest #1100**, second **Wed.**, noon. All ages welcome. In-person, Black Forest Lutheran Church, 12455 Black Forest Rd.
 - **Senior Bingo**, third **Wed.** Silver Alliance Senior Center, Space is limited to 16 participants. RSVP & info: Sue Walker, 719-464-6873, or email sue@monumentalfitness.com.
 - **Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7829**, third **Wed.**, 7 pm, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce community room, 166 2nd St., Monument. New members welcome. Info: Post Commander and POC Bruce Beyerly, Bruce.Beyerly@gmail.com.
 - **VFW Auxiliary to Post 7829**, third **Wed.**, 7 pm, The Country Club at Woodmoor, 18945 Pebble Beach Way, Monument. Guests are welcome to join; contact carlsonmkc@aol.com for instructions on how to connect. If you are a relative of a veteran who served on foreign soil during war or other military action, you may be eligible. Info: Kathy Carlson, 719-488-1902, carlsonmkc@aol.com.
 - **Pikes Peak Genealogical Society**, Wed. **Mar. 8**, 6:30pm. Program: Learn to use Google Earth Pro, a 360° three-dimensional way to view your ancestors world. You will learn how to use Google Earth's tools in conjunction with genealogical research techniques to identify old photos, find plot and virtually visit your ancestors homestead and local and use historic maps. Zoom hang out 7:00 p.m. start usually meets second Wed., Guests welcome to hybrid meeting. Currently only zoom. Info: PPGSPresident@PPGS.com
 - **Al-anon Meeting: Monument Serenity AFG**, every **Thu.**, 7-8 pm, Ascent Church (formerly the Tri-Lakes Chapel), 1750 Deer Creek Rd., Monument. Info: MonumentSerenity@gmail.com.
 - **Palmer Divide Quiltmakers**, first **Thu.**, 6:30-8:30 pm at Monument Chamber of Commerce building, 166 2nd St, Monument, CO.
 - **Al-Anon meeting: Letting Go**, every **Thu.**, 9-10:15 am at Ascent Church, 1750 Deer Creek

- Rd., Monument. For additional information go to www.al-anon-co.org.
- **Networking breakfast**, first and third **Thu.**, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce in person or via Zoom 166 2nd Street Monument 7:30-9 am free registration at www.TriLakeschamber.com.
 - **Fuel Church Griefshare**, every **Thu.**, 5:30-7:30 pm 643 State Highway 105, Palmer Lake. Email info@fuel.org. 643 Hwy 105, Palmer Lake.
 - **A.A. Big Book Study**, every **Thu.**, 7 pm, Family of Christ Lutheran Church, 675 W. Baptist Rd. Call 425-436-6200, access code 575176#.
 - **Palmer Lake Historical Society**, **Thu.**, **Mar. 16**, meeting, 7:00 pm, doors open at 6:30 pm. *KKK in Denver in the 1920s*. Usually meets third Thu. Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent St. <https://palmerdividehistory.org>
 - **Friends of Fox Run Park**, fourth **Thu.** Zoom meeting, 7 pm, email friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com, they will email you the link the day of the meeting. Join the growing group to learn about volunteering and supporting the park for forest safety, trails, trees, education, more. Info: friendsoffoxrunpark@gmail.com.
 - **Tri-Lakes Women's Club** (TLWC) monthly meeting, third **Fri.**, **Mar. 17**, 11:30 AM Location: Falcon Club, USAFA. Speaker: Ben Nasser, *The surprising role that women disguised as men played in the Civil War*. Meetings are open to all members of Tri-Lakes Women's Club. To become a member, or learn about the club, visit our website at tlwc.net Contact Info: Tri-Lakes Women's Club membership@tlwc.net
 - **Senior Book Club**, second **Fri.**, 11 am-noon, Silver Alliance Senior Center, all are welcome. Coffee & snacks served. RSVP & info: Sue, 719-330-0241.
 - **Gleneagle Women's Club**, membership luncheon, third **Fri.**, Sept-June, various venues, 12 activity groups, i.e., hiking, bridge, etc. Guests welcome. For information contact Amy Miller, (310) 941-1590.
 - **Monument Dementia Caregiver Support Group**, second **Sat.**, 9:45-11:15 am. Meets in Person, First National Bank Monument (581 Highway 105, Monument, CO 80132). Meets monthly, 2nd Sat. Contact: Registration is required, call 800-272-3900 or email khare@alz.org to register.
 - **Tri-Lakes Monument radio Association**, Details: Contact Bob Witte, 719-659-3727.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **VOLUNTEER TODAY! Our Community News mailing day**, **Thu.**, **Mar. 30**, approx. 9 am-2 pm. We are all volunteers at OCN and need YOUR help, even for an hour two, getting the papers ready to mail. Contact AllenAlchian@ocn.me to sign up and get the address and exact times.
- **St. Peter Church Lenten Fish Frys** - Benefits Tri-Lakes Cares and other local charities. Dinners, Fridays **Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31**, 5-7 pm. St Peter Church, 55 Jefferson St Monument, CO. Adults \$12 Kids 5-12 \$8 pay at door Alan Feldkamp St Peter Church, Monument, CO alanfeldkamp@gmail.com 719 332 8541.
- **Covered Treasures Bookstore**, **Thu.**, **Mar 9**, 4-7, book signings: Margaret Mizushima will sign *Standing Dead* and Scott Graham will sign *Sa-guaro Sanction*. 105 Second Street, Monument.
- **Meet and Greet with Monument Mayor Mitch LaKind**, **Sat.**, **Mar. 11**, 10 am - noon, Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, 166 Second St. Topics include water, development, and comprehensive and park plans.
- **Help nuns "Stuff the Truck" with food**, **Sun.**, **Mar. 12**, Benet Hill Monastery, 3190 Benet Lane, Colorado Springs, CO 80921. The Sisters of Benet Hill Monastery and Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration of Colorado Springs will celebrate Catholic Sisters Week by gathering food for neighbors experiencing food insecurity. Info: www.benethillmonastery.org. See ad on page 3.
- **Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce**, Networking, **Tue.**, **Mar. 14**, 5 pm-7:00 pm, members free,

- \$15 for non-members. Details: www.trilakes-chamber.com. 719-481-3282.
- **McCords Garden center**, special offers through **Mar. 15**, 2720 MCS Shane Dr., www.mccordsgardens.com. See ad on page 4.
- **MVEA board nominations by committee due** **Thu.**, **Mar. 16** and petition due **Apr. 6**. See ad on page 9.
- **Pikes Peak Brewing Co. St. Patrick's Weekend**, **Fri.-Sat.**, **Mar. 17-18**, 1756 Lake Woodmoor Dr. See ad on page 2.
- **Kiwanis and D38 Stars of tomorrow talent show**, **Sun.**, **Mar. 19**, 2 p.m. Palmer Ridge High School Auditorium, Tickets: MHKiwanis.org. See ad on page 3.
- **Jackson Creek Senior Living** will host a 12-week GriefShare support group for anyone grieving the death of a family member or friend. Meets weekly **Tuesdays**, Feb. 7 - Apr. 25, 6-8 p.m., Falcon's Nest (3rd Floor), located at 16601 Jackson Creek Parkway. Open enrollment, but registration is required. to register, visit <https://www.griefshare.org/groups/162569>. Please wait until you receive confirmation before joining the group.
- **Affordable Flooring Connection**, special offers through **Mar. 31**. see ad on page 2.
- **Cornerstone Cleaners**, special offers through **Mar. 31**. 1030 W. Baptist Road, near King Soopers. See ad on page 4.
- **Art Camps** - AR workshops 1, 4, and 5-day options kids six through 15. www.arworkshop.com/ColoradoSprings. See ad on page 3.
- **Eagle Wine & Spirits**, special offers through **Mar. 31**. Baptist Road next to King Soopers. See ad on page 3.
- **Hamula Orthodontics**, special offers through **Mar. 31**. 1860 Woodmoor Dr., #200. See ad on page 3.
- **Monument Cleaners**, special offers through **Mar. 31**, 15932 Jackson Creek Pkwy., in Monument Marketplace. See ad on page 5.
- **Monumental Med Spa**, special offers through **Mar. 31** at the loft, 4 Hwy. 105 Palmer Lake. See ad on page 7.
- **Noel Relief Centers**, new patient special. 950 Baptist Rd #130, Monument. See ad on page 7.
- **The Living Room Plants**, special offers through **Mar. 31**. 12229 Voyager Pkwy, Suite 100. See ad on page 5.
- **Tri Lakes Collision and Auto Service Center**, special offers through **Mar. 31.**, 2101 Wolf Court, Monument. www.trilakescollision.com. See ad on page 5.
- **Western Museum of Mining and Industry Steam Camp**: **Mon.-Fri.**, **Mar. 27-31**. 9-3 p.m. Grades 3-5, www.wmi.org. See ad on page 8.
- **Special Hazardous Waste event** for hard to recycle items, **Fri.**, **Apr. 7**, El Paso County Household Hazardous Waste Facility 3255 Akers Drive Colorado Springs, CO 80922
- **EGGStravaganza**, Fox Run Regional Park **Fri.**,

- **Apr. 7**, 7:45pm; 8:00-8:15pm; 8:30 pm start times. Glow in the dark egg hunt at Fox Run Regional Park. 2-6 person teams to find eggs with answers, win a prize! Ages 8+. Prepaid timed registration required, \$5 per person/ \$4 per member elpasocountynaturecenters.com
- **Ent Center for the Arts presents Peter Pan**, **Sun.**, **May 7**. See ad on page 4.
- **YMCA summer day camp** starts **Tue.**, **May 30**, Info: www.ppymca.org/daycamp. See ad on page 6.

Our community calendar carries listings on a space-available basis for Tri-Lakes events that are sponsored by local governmental entities and not-for-profit organizations. We include events that are open to the general public and are not religious or

Letters to Our Community

Our Community News welcomes letters to the editor on topics of general interest to readers in the Tri-Lakes area. We do not knowingly print letters that are substantially the same as letters that have been submitted to other publications. To ensure that OCN contains a variety of viewpoints, each letter writer is limited to a maximum of one (1) letter per issue and six (6) letters within a twelve (12) month period. To submit a letter, please:

- Email your letter, preferably as an attached Microsoft Word document, to editor@ocn.me or mail a copy to **Our Community News, P.O. Box 1742, Monument, CO 80132-1742**.
- Identify your submission as a letter to the editor and confirm that it has not been submitted to any other publication.
- Include a suggested headline or title that summarizes the topic you are addressing.
- Limit your letter to no more than 300 words including your suggested headline and closing.
- Include your full name, home address, phone numbers, and email address, if you have one. Only your name will be published.
- Submit your letter so we receive it no later than midnight, Friday, two weeks prior to the publication date.

If you have not received an acknowledgement two days after your email submission or one week after you mailed your letter, please contact John Heiser, Publisher, at (719) 488-3455 or editor@ocn.me. At OCN's sole discretion, we may ask you for clarification of your statements. Include references, such as website links, in your letter for any facts and figures you cite. OCN does not guarantee every letter will appear in print or on-line and does not guarantee a publication date. The number of letters printed on a particular topic or in a particular issue may be limited. Letters containing personal attacks or endorsements for or complaints about individually-named commercial products or services will not be published.

Content

Articles in Our Community News focus on the deliberations of Tri-Lakes area governmental bodies such as the Monument Board of Trustees, Palmer Lake Town Council, and many of the local water, sanitation, fire, and school district boards.

Unlike papers that try to figure out what the "story" is and then get quotes on each side to presumably lead the reader to conclude what the "truth" is, OCN's role is to report in detail on public meetings of local governmental entities. We report what was talked about and what was decided. By reading OCN, you can find out what you might have learned if you had attended those public meetings. In this context, "truth" is that the articles accurately represent what transpired at the meetings.

The content of ads, inserts, and letters to the editor in OCN is solely the responsibility of the advertisers and authors who place those ads, inserts, and letters. The appearance of an ad, insert, or letter in OCN does not imply endorsement of the ad, insert, or letter's content or purpose. While OCN does not knowingly run false ads, inserts, or letters, we do not research the accuracy of that content. Readers are encouraged to do their own research prior to committing to use the products or services offered or accept the conclusions of letters to the editor. Readers with concerns about the content of an ad, insert, or letter should take up those concerns with the advertiser or author.

Contact John Heiser, Publisher, at johnheiser@ocn.me or (719) 488-3455 with any questions.

Look for our next issue
Saturday, April 1

Ad space reservations due: **Fri., Mar. 10**
Finished ad artwork due: **Fri., Mar. 17**
Letters to the editor due: **Fri., Mar. 17**
Calendar items due: **Fri., Mar. 24**

Visit our website to read, download, and search all the back issues at **WWW.OCN.ME**



Volunteers reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area

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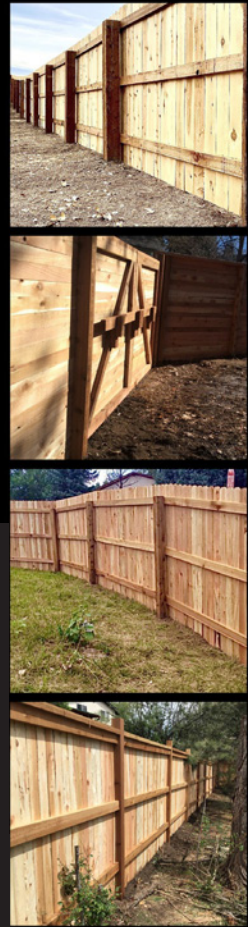
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